

**RICARDO FLORES  
MAGÓN**



**READER**



**PRINCIPLES, PROPOSITIONS &  
DISCUSSIONS  
FOR LAND & FREEDOM**

AN INTRODUCTORY WORD TO THE  
'ANARCHIVE'

**"Anarchy is Order!"**

*'I must Create a System or be enslav'd by  
another Man's.  
I will not Reason & Compare: my business  
is to Create'  
(William Blake)*

During the 19th century, anarchism has developed as a result of a social current which aims for freedom and happiness. A number of factors since World War I have made this movement, and its ideas, disappear little by little under the dust of history.

After the classical anarchism – of which the Spanish Revolution was one of the last representatives—a 'new' kind of resistance was founded in the sixties which claimed to be based (at least partly) on this anarchism. However this resistance is often limited to a few (and even then partly misunderstood) slogans such as 'Anarchy is order', 'Property is theft',...

Information about anarchism is often hard to come by, monopolised and intellectual; and therefore visibly disappearing. The 'anarchival' or 'anarchist archive' Anarchy is Order ( in short **A.O**) is an attempt to make the '**principles, propositions and discussions**' of this tradition available again for anyone it concerns. We believe that these texts are part of our own heritage. They don't belong to publishers, institutes or specialists.

These texts thus have to be available for all anarchists and other people interested. That is one of the conditions to give anarchism a new impulse, to let the 'new anarchism' outgrow the slogans. This is what makes this project relevant for us: we must find our roots to be able to renew ourselves. We have to learn from the mistakes of our socialist past. History has shown that a large number of the anarchist ideas remain

standing, even during the most recent social-economic developments.

**‘Anarchy Is Order’ does not make profits, everything is spread at the price of printing- and papercosts. This of course creates some limitations for these archives.**

**Everyone is invited to spread along the information we give . This can be done by copying our leaflets, printing from the CD that is available or copying it, e-mailing the texts ,...Become your own anarchivists!!!**

(Be aware though of copyright restrictions. We also want to make sure that the anarchist or non-commercial printers, publishers and authors are not being harmed. Our priority on the other hand remains to spread the ideas, not the ownership of them.)

The anarchivists offers these texts hoping that values like **freedom, solidarity and direct action** get a new meaning and will be lived again; so that the struggle continues against the

*‘demons of flesh and blood, that sway scepters down here;  
and the dirty microbes that send us dark diseases and wish to  
squash us like horseflies;  
and the will- ‘o-the-wisp of the saddest ignorance’.*  
(L-P. Boon)

The rest depends as much on you as it depends on us. Don’t mourn, Organise!

Comments, questions, criticism,cooperation can be send to  
[A.O@advalvas.be](mailto:A.O@advalvas.be)

A complete list and updates are available on this address, new texts are always

**welcome!!**

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## **BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

Ricardo Flores Magon was born on September 16, 1874, Mexican Independence Day, in San Antonio Eloxochitlan, Oaxaca, Mexico. He died on November 21, 1922, at Leavenworth Penitentiary in Kansas, USA.

Ricardo Flores Magon and his (PLM) often worked with and won the support of United States labor movement groups.

Magon explored the writings and ideas of many anarchists: He examined the works of early anarchists Michael Bakunin and Pierre-Joseph Proudhon.

He was also influenced by his anarchist contemporaries: Elis?e Reclus, Charles Malato, Errico Malatesta, Anselmo Lorenzo, Emma Goldman, Fernando Tarrida del Marmol, and Max Stirner.

But he was most influenced by Peter Kropotkin.

Magon also read from the works of Karl Marx and Henrik Isben.

## **THE RIGHT OF PROPERTY**

(El Derecho de Propiedad)

**RICARDO FLORES MAGON**

Regeneracion, March 18, 1911.

Among all of the absurdities that man reveres, this is one of the greatest and one of the most revered.

The right of property is ancient, as ancient as man's stupidity and blindness; but just the antiquity of a right can not give it the "right" to survive. If it is an absurd right, it is necessary to abolish it without giving importance to its birth at the time when man covered his nakedness with the animal skins.

The right of property is an absurd right because it had its origins in crime, fraud, and abuse of power. In the beginning, the individual's right of territorial property did not exist. Land was worked in common, forests provided firewood to the hearths of all, harvests were distributed among the members of the community according to their needs. Examples of this nature can still be seen in some primitive tribes, and even in Mexico this custom thrived in indigenous communities in the era of Spanish domination, and lived until relatively recently, being the attempted act of despotism to take away the lands of those indigenous tribes, lands that they had cultivated in common for many centuries the cause of the Yaqui Wars in Sonora and of the Mayas in the Yucatan.

The individual's right of territorial property was born of the attempt of the first ambitious person that brought war on a

neighboring tribe to commit it into the servitude, the land that the tribe cultivated in common coming under the power of the conqueror and his captains. Thus through the means of violence, through the means of force was born private, territorial property. Speculation, fraud, theft -- more or less legal, but still theft -- are other origins of private, territorial property. Then the first thieves having seized the land, they themselves created laws to defend what they called and still call in this century a "right", that is, the right they gave themselves to use the lands that they had stolen and to enjoy the product of them without anyone bothering them. It is important to note that the displaced were not the ones to give those thieves the right of property; it was not the people of any country who gave the power to confiscate that resource, to which all humankind has the right. It was the thieves themselves, who protected by the force, wrote the law that would protect their crimes and hold in check the displaced from possible revenge.

This so-called right has been passed from fathers to sons through inheritance, so that resources which should be common, have remained in the command of a social caste only with obvious prejudice of the rest of humanity whose members were born when land was already divided among the few shirkers.

The origin of territorial property has been violence, through violence it is still maintained; since if someone wants to use a piece of land without the consent of the so-called owner, he must go to jail, taken into custody precisely by the henchmen that are maintained not by the landowners but by the common worker, although the contributions apparently come from the coffers of the rich, they are very skillful at finding ways to reimburse themselves by paying starving wages to the farmers and selling them articles of primary



necessity at high prices. Then in that way then the people, with their work, maintain the henchmen that deprive them from taking what belongs to them.

And if this is the origin of territorial property, if the right of property is nothing more than the legal consecration of crime, why lift arms to heaven when it is known that the Mexican Liberal Party works to expropriate the land that the rich monopolize, that is, the descendants of the thieves that had taken possession through crime, to turn it over to the natural owner, that is, the people, that is all the citizens of Mexico?

Some Maderistas sympathize with the idea of turning the land over to the people; but conservatives in the end, they want the act to reflect a legal solemnity, that is, they want a congress to decree the expropriation. I have written much on this topic, and I am amazed that there are still those who cannot understand what I have said, because I presume that I have spoken with complete clarity. "No congress, I have said, would dare to decree the expropriation of land, because the Congressional seats will not go to the workers but to the bosses; they will not go to the uneducated and the poor, but to the intellectuals and the rich." That is to say, in Congress the so-called ruling classes: the rich, intellectuals, scientists, professionals will be represented; but it would not permit any worker of pick and shovel, any unskilled laborer, any workman to sneak in and if through a true miracle any worker was to freely obtain the threshold of the dwelling-place of the law, how could he struggle against men practiced in the art of verbal debate? How could he have his ideas considered if he lacked the scientific knowledge that the bourgeois possessed in abundance? But one could say that the working people would send competent people to Congress to represent them.

Throughout the world the so-called representatives of labor in the parliaments have been discredited. They are as much bourgeois as any other representative. What have the workers' representatives of the English people done in the House of Commons? What objective gain have the workers' representatives obtained in the French Parliament? In the German Parliament there are a large number of workers' representatives and what have they accomplished in favor of the economic freedom of the workers? The Austrian-Hungarian Parliament is noted for the enlarged number of workers' representatives that sit on its boards and nevertheless the problem of hunger in Austria-Hungary is unresolved, just as in any other country where there are no representatives of labor in Congress.

There is, then, the need to let go of the illusion. The expropriation of the land possessed by the rich, should be realized during the present insurrection. We liberals will not be committing a crime by turning over the land to the working people, because it belongs to them, the people; it is the land that their most distant ancestors lived on and watered with their sweat; the land that the Spaniards robbed by force from our Indian fathers; the land that those Spaniards gave as inheritance to their descendants, who are the ones that actually possess them. That land belongs to all Mexicans by natural law. Some of them might have bought it; but where did they get the money to make the purchase if not from the work of the Mexican unskilled workers and laborers? Others took that land denouncing it as wasteland; but if it was wasteland, it belongs to the people and no one had the right to give it to whomever offered a few dollars for it. Others might have acquired the land by taking advantage of their friendship with government men to obtain it without it costing them a cent if it were wasteland, or through judicial dealings if it belonged to an enemy of

the dictatorship or a person of no influence or money. Others still acquired the land by giving loans with high interest to the small farmers that ended up compelled to leave the land in the hands of the Matatías [hired assassins], unable to pay the debt.

Compañeros: All who hold the conviction that the action the Liberal Party is going to take is humanitarian, endeavor to convince those who still adore capital and revere this so-called right of property, that the Liberal Party is in the right, that their work will be a work of justice and that the Mexican people will be truly great when they can reap the benefits of land and liberty without obstacles.

Ricardo Flores Magon

## **TO WOMAN**

(A La Mujer)

**RICARDO FLORES MAGON**

Regeneracion, September 24, 1910.

Companeras:

Revolution approaches! With angered eyes, and flaming hair, her trembling hands knock anxiously on the doors of our nation. Let us welcome her with serenity, for although she carries death in her breast, she is the announcement of life, the herald of hope. She will destroy and create at the same time; she will raze and build. Her fists are the invincible fists of a people in rebellion. She does not offer roses or caresses; she offers an axe and a torch.

Interrupting the millennial feast of the content, sedition raises her head, and the prophecy of Balthasar has with time become a clenched fist hanging over the heads of the so-called ruling class. Revolution approaches! Her mission will ignite the flames in which privilege and injustice will burn. Companeras, do not fear the revolution. You constitute one-half of the human species and what affects humanity affects you as an integral part of it. If men are slaves, you are too. Bondage does not recognize sex; the infamy that degrades men equally degrades you. You cannot escape the shame of oppression. The same forces which conquer men strangle you.

We must stand in solidarity in the grand conquest for freedom and happiness. Are you mothers? Are you wives?

Are you sisters? Are you daughters? Your duty is to help man; to be there to encourage him when he vacillates; stand by his side when he suffers; to lighten his sorrow; to laugh and to sing with him when victory smiles. You don't understand politics? This is not a question of politics; this is a matter of life or death. Man's bondage is yours and perhaps yours is more sorrowful, more sinister, and more infamous.

Are you a worker? Because you are a woman you are paid less than men, and made to work harder. You must suffer the impertinence of the foreman or proprietor; and if you are attractive, the bosses will make advances. Should you weaken, they would rob you of your virtue in the same cowardly manner as you are robbed of the product of your labor.

Under this regime of social injustice which corrupts humanity, the existence of women wavers in the wretchedness of a destiny which fades away either in the blackness of fatigue and hunger or in the obscurity of marriage and prostitution.

In order to fully appreciate women's part in universal suffering, it is necessary to study page by page this somber book called Life, which like so many thorns strips away the flesh of humanity.

So ancient is women's misfortune that its origins are lost in the obscurity of legend. In the infancy of mankind, the birth of a female child was considered a disgrace to the tribe. Women toiled the land, carried firewood from the forest and water from the stream, tended the livestock, constructed shelters, wove cloth, cooked food, and cared for the sick and the young. The filthiest work was done by

women. Should an ox die of fatigue, the women took its place pulling the plow, and when war broke out between rivaling tribes, the women merely changed masters, and continued under the lash of the new owners, carrying out their tasks as beasts of burden.

Later, under the influence of Greek civilization, women were elevated one step in the esteem of men. No longer were they beasts of burden as in the primitive clan, nor did they lead secluded lives as in oriental societies. If they belonged to a free class, their role was one of procreators of citizens for the state; if they were slaves, they provided workers for the fields.

Christianity aggravated the situation of women with its contempt for the flesh. The founding fathers of the Church vented their outbursts of rage against feminine qualities. St. Augustine, St. Thomas, and other saints, before whose statues women now kneel, referred to women as daughters of the devil, vessels of impurity, and condemned them to the tortures of hell.

Women's position in this century varies according to their social stature; but in spite of the refinements of customs and the progress of philosophy, women continue subordinated to men by tradition and laws. Women are perpetually treated as minors when the law places the wife under the custody of the husband. She cannot vote or be elected, and to enter into civil contracts she must own a sizeable fortune.

Throughout history women have been considered inferior to men, not only by law but also by custom. From this erroneous and unjust concept derives the misfortune which she has suffered since humanity differentiated itself from lower animal forms by the use of fire and tools.

Humiliated, degraded, bound by chains of tradition to an irrational inferiority, indoctrinated in the affairs of heaven by clerics, but totally ignorant of world problems, she is suddenly caught in the whirlwind of industrial production which above all requires cheap labor to sustain the competition created by the voracious "princes of capital" who exploit her circumstances. She is not as prepared as men for the industrial struggle, nor is she organized with the women of her class to fight alongside her brother workers against the rapacity of capitalism.

For this reason, though women work more than men, they are paid less, and misery, mistreatment, and insult are today as yesterday the bitter harvest for a whole existence of sacrifice. So meager are women's salaries that frequently they must prostitute themselves to meet their families' basic needs, especially when in the marketplace of marriage they do not find a husband. When it is motivated by economic security instead of love, marriage is but another form of prostitution, sanctioned by the law and authorized by public officials. That is, a wife sells her body for food exactly as does a prostitute; this occurs in the majority of marriages. And what could be said of the vast army of women who do not succeed in finding a husband? The increasing cost of life's basic necessities; the displacement of human labor by the perfection of machinery; the ever-decreasing price of human labor—all contribute to the burden of supporting a family. The compulsory draft tears strong and healthy young men from the bosom of a society and lessens the number eligible for marriage. Migration of workers, caused by economic and political phenomena, also reduces the number of men capable of marriage. Alcoholism, gambling and other ills of society further reduce the number of available men. Consequently, the number of single women

grows alarmingly. Since their situation is so precarious, they swell the ranks of prostitution, accelerating the degeneration of the human race by this debasement of body and spirit.

Companeras: This is the frightful picture offered by modern society. In it you see men and women alike suffering the tyranny of a political and social environment in complete discord with the progress of civilization and the advances of philosophy. In times of anguish, however, do not look up to the heavens for solutions and explanations because in that lies the greatest contribution to your eternal bondage. The solution is here on earth! That solution is rebellion.

Demand that your husbands, brothers, fathers, sons and friends pick up the gun. Spit in the face of those who refuse to pick up a weapon against oppression.

Revolution approaches! Jimenez and Acayucan, Palomas, Viesca, Las Vacuous and Valladolid are the first gust of the inevitable wind. A tragic paradox: freedom, which is life, is gained by imparting death!

Ricardo Flores Magon



# **MANIFESTO OF SEPTEMBER 23RD 1911**

## **FLORES MAGON AND THE EZLN 1911**

(This has been reproduced from: Flores Magon, Ricardo. Land and Liberty: Anarchist Influences in the Mexican Revolution. David Poole, ed. Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1977.)

### **INTRODUCTION**

There is still considerable debate regarding the role of the Partido Liberal Mexicano (PLM) and its Organizing Junta, including such figures as Ricardo Flores Magon, Librado Rivera, Anselmo Figueiroa and Enrique Flores Magon, as well as the specific foco leaders Praxedis Guerrero and Jesus Maria Rangel, in the unfolding of the Mexican Revolution in the early part of the twentieth century. Whether led by or simply inspired by the PLM, there is little doubt that the uprisings, land appropriations and bids for political power constituted one of the major revolutions of the twentieth century. The "Manifesto of September 23rd 1911" reprinted below describes a call for the continuation of such efforts as well as a justification for the struggle as it was taking place in one of the early phases of the revolutionary process. The Magonista manifesto's importance transcends its significance as an important primary document of the Mexican revolution. The Magonista ideology and language are relevant to contemporary readers for the simple reason that much of the revolutionary activity described below has continued until the present day in Mexico. In particular, Mexico has witnessed a number of peasant uprisings that have appropriated the means of production, confronted corrupt local and state governments and endured brutal repression

by police and military forces. In some of the more economically and socially exploited regions of the country peasant organizations have consistently challenged the imposition of market regulations, exploitive labor practices, and corrupt politicians in order to maintain an independent and distinct lifestyle outside the logics of capital. Most recently, campesinos and PRD activists in Tabasco renewed their efforts to confront the devastating environmental destruction and the exploitation of the state controlled oil producer PEMEX. Local residents throughout Tabasco successfully blockaded over sixty oil platforms costing PEMEX approximately \$450,000 a day despite brutal attacks by a force of over eight hundred military, state and judicial police. Peasant organizations such as the OCSS in Guerrero and the OCEZ in Chiapas have fought successfully for self government in opposition to the corrupt one party state led by the PRI and have regularly re-appropriated land from criminally irresponsible land barons.

The most notable parallel with the PLM program rests with the revolutionary project of the EZLN. Beginning with their January 1, 1994 capture of four municipalities in Chiapas, the Zapatistas have captured the imagination of those people who have maintained their relentless struggle for democracy, liberty and justice! The Zapatistas armed struggle has reinvigorated moribund political movements and ignited new revolutionary activity mobilizing Mexican civil society and others internationally. Zapatista efforts to foster dialogue through sophisticated use of technologically advanced communication systems, manipulating the media, convening political forums, creating centers of resistance and specific efforts designed to empower local democratic action have resulted in invigorated confrontations with

exploitive and destructive forces in the service of global financial capital.

## MANIFESTO of September 23rd 1911

Manifesto issued by the Junta of the Mexican Liberal Party, September 23, 1911, scattered at that time broadcast and republished in its official organ, Regeneracion, January 20, 1912.

Mexicans:

The Organising [sic] Junta of the Mexican Liberal Party views with sympathy your efforts to put in practice the lofty ideals of political, economic and social emancipation, the triumph of which on earth will bring to an end the already sufficiently extensive quarrel between man and man, which has its origin in that inequality of fortune which springs from the principle of private property.

To abolish that principle means to annihilate all the political, economic, social, religious and moral institutions that form the environment within which are asphyxiated the free initiative and the free association of human beings who, that they may not perish, find themselves obliged to carry on among themselves a frenzied competition from which there issue triumphant not the best, not the most self-sacrificing, not those most richly endowed, physically, morally or intellectually, but the most crafty, the most egoistic, the least scrupulous, the hardest-hearted those who place their own well-being above all considerations of human solidarity and human justice.

But for the principle of private property there would be no reason for government, which is needed solely to keep the disinherited from going to extremes in their complaints or rebellions against those who have got into their possession the social wealth. Nor would be there any reason for the church, whose exclusive object is to strangle in the human being the innate spirit of revolt against oppression and

exploitation, by the preaching of patience, of resignation and of humility; silencing the cries of the most powerful and fruitful instincts by the practice of immoral penances, cruel and injurious to personal health and --that the poor may not aspire to the enjoyment of this earth and become a danger to the privileges of the rich --by promising the humblest, the most resigned, the most patient, a heaven located in the infinite, beyond the farthest stars the eye can reach.

Capital, Authority, the Church -- there you have the sombre [sic] trinity that makes of this beauteous earth a paradise for those who, by cunning, violence and crime, have been successful in gathering into their clutches the product of the toiler's sweat, of the blood of the tears and sacrifices of thousands of generations of workers; but a hell for those who, with muscle and intelligence, till the soil, set the machinery in motion, build the houses and transport the products. Thus humanity remains divided into two classes whose interests are diametrically opposed --the capitalist class and the working class; the class that has possession of the land, the machinery of production and the means of transporting wealth, and the class that must rely on its muscle and intelligence to support itself.

Between these two social classes there cannot exist any bond of friendship or fraternity, for the possessing class always seeks to perpetuate the existing economic, political and social system which guarantees it tranquil enjoyment of the fruits of its robberies, while the working class exerts itself to destroy the iniquitous system and institute one in which the land, the houses, the machinery of production and the means of transportation shall be for the common use.

Mexicans! The Mexican Liberal Party recognises [sic] that every human being, by the very fact of his having come into life, has a right to enjoy each and every one of the advantages modern civilization offers, because those advantages are the product of the efforts and sacrifices of the working class from all time.

The Mexican Liberal Party recognises labour [sic] as necessary for the subsistence [sic] of the individual and society, and accordingly all, save the aged, the crippled, the incapacitated and children ought to dedicate themselves to the production of something useful for the satisfaction of their necessary wants.

The Mexican Liberal Party that the so-called rights of individual property is an iniquitous right, because it subjects the greater number of human beings to toil and suffering for the satisfaction and ease of a small number of capitalists. The Mexican Liberal Party recognises that Authority and the Church are the supports of the iniquity of Capital and therefore,

The Organising Junta of the Mexican Liberal Party has solemnly declared war against Authority, war against Capital, and war against the Church.

Against Capital, Authority and the Church the Mexican Liberal Party has hoisted the Red Flag on Mexico's fields of action, where our brothers are battling like lions, disputing victory with the hosts of bourgeoisdom, be those Maderists, Reyists, Vazquists, Cientificos or what not, since all such propose merely to put in office some one as first magistrate of the nation, in order that under his shelter they may do business without any consideration for the mass of

Mexico's population, inasmuch as, one and all, they recognise [sic] as sacred the right of individual property.

In these moments of confusion so propitious for the attack on oppression and exploitation; in these moments in which Authority, weakened, unbalanced, vacillating, attacked on every side by unchained passions, by tempests of appetites that have sprung into life, and hope immediately to glut themselves; in these moments of anxiety, agony and terror on the part of privileged, compact masses of the disinherited are invading the lands, burning the title deeds, laying their creative hands on the soil and threatening with their fists all that was respectable yesterday -- Authority, Capital, the Clergy. They are turning the furrow, scattering the seed and await, with emotion the first fruit of free labour.

These Mexicans, are the first practical results of the propaganda and of the action of soldiers of the proletariat, of the generous upholders of our equalitarian [sic] principles, of our brothers who are bidding defiance to all imposition and all exploitation with the cry -- a cry of death for all those above, but of life and hope for all those below - - "Long Live Land and Liberty."

Expropriation must be pursued to the end, at all costs, while this grand movement lasts. This is what has been done and is being done by our brothers of Morelos, of Southern Puebla, of Michoacan, of Guerrero, Veracruz, of the Northern portion of the State of Tamaulipas, of Durango, Sonora, Sinaloa, Jalisco, Chihuahua, Oaxaca, Yucatan, Quintana Roo, and parts of other States, as even the Mexican bourgeois press itself has had to confess. There the proletariat has taken possession of the land without waiting for a paternal government to deign to make it

happy, for it knows that nothing good is to be expected of governments and that the emancipation of the workers must be the task of the workers themselves.

These first acts of expropriation have been crowned with most pleasing success; but they must not be limited to taking possession of the land and the implements of agriculture alone. There must be a resolute taking possession, of all the industries by those working in them, who should bring it about similarly that the lands, the mines, the factories, the workshops, the foundries, the railroads, the shipping, the stores of all kinds and the houses shall be in the power of each and every one of the inhabitants, without distinction of sex.

The inhabitants of each region in which such an act of supreme justice has been effected will only have to agree that all that is found in the stores, warehouses, granaries, etc., shall be brought to a place of access by all, where men and women of reliability can make an exact inventory of what has been collected and can calculate the time it will last -- the necessities and the number of inhabitants that will have to use it being taken into account -- from the moment of expropriation, until the first crops shall have been raised and the other industries shall have turned out their first products.

When such an inventory has been made the workers in the different industries will understand, fraternally and among themselves, how to so regulate production that none shall want while this movement is going on, and that only those who are not willing to work shall die of hunger -- the aged, the incapacitated, and the children, who have a right to enjoy all, being excepted.



Everything produced will be sent to the community's general store, from which all will have the right to take what their necessities require, on the exhibition proof that they are working at such an industry.

The human being aspires to satisfy wants with the least possible expenditure of effort, and the best way to obtain that result is to work the land and other industries in common. If the land is divided up and each family takes a piece there will be grave danger of falling anew into the capitalist system, since there will not be wanting men of cunning or grasping habits who may get more than others and in the long run exploit their fellows. Apart from that danger is the fact that if each family works its little patch of land it will have to toil as much or more than it does today under the system of individual property to obtain the miserable result now achieved; but, if there is joint ownership of the land and the peasants work it in common, they will toil less and produce more. Of course there will be enough for each to have his own house and a ground-plot for his own pleasure. What has been said as to working the land in common applies to working the factories, working shops, etc., in common. Let each, according to his temperament [sic], tastes, and inclinations choose the kind of work that suits him best, provided he produces sufficient to cover his necessary wants and does not become a charge on the community.

Operating in the manner pointed out, that is to say, expropriation being followed immediately by the organisation [sic] of production, free of masters and based on the necessities of the inhabitants of each region, nobody will suffer want, in spite of the armed movement going on, until the time when, that movement having terminated with the disappearance of the last bourgeois and the last agent of

authority, and the law which upholds privilege [sic] having been shattered, everything having been placed in the hands of the toilers, we shall meet in fraternal embrace and celebrate with cries of joy in inauguration of a system that will guarantee to every human being Bread and Liberty.

Mexicans! It is for this the Mexican Liberal Party is struggling. For this a Pleiades of heroes is spilling its generous blood, fighting under the Red Flag to the famous cry of "Land and Liberty."

The Liberals have not laid down their arms despite the treaty of peace made by the traitor Madero with the tyrant Diaz, or despite the offers of the bourgeoisie which proposed to fill its pockets with gold. It has acted thus because we Liberals are men who are convinced that political liberty does not benefit the poor but only the place hunters, and our object is not to obtain offices or distinctions, but to take everything out of the hands of the bourgeoisie that it may put in the power of the workers.

Whichever one of them may triumph the activity of the different political bands who are now disputing among themselves for supremacy will result in exactly what happened under the tyrant Porfirio Diaz, since no man, however well-intentioned he may be, can do anything in favour [sic] of the poor class when he finds himself in power. That activity has produced the present chaos, and we, the disinherited ought to take advantage of the special circumstances in which the country finds itself, in order to put in practice, without the loss of time, on the spot, the ideals of the Mexican Liberal Party. We should not wait to carry expropriation into effect until the peace has been made, for by that time the supplies in stores, granaries, warehouses, and other places of deposit will have been

exhausted. Moreover, owing to the state of war prevailing throughout the country, production will have been suspended and the sequel of the struggle will be famine. But if we carry expropriation and the organisation of labour into effect during the struggle no one will be in lack of the necessities of life then or afterwards.

Mexicans! If you wish to be free once more, struggle only for the Mexican Liberal Party. All others are offering you political liberty when they have triumphed. We liberals invite you to take immediate possession of the land, the machinery, the means of transportation and the buildings, without excepting any one to give them to you and without waiting for any law to decree it, since the laws are not made by the poor but by the gentry, who take good care not to make any against the interests of their caste.

It is the duty of us poor people to work and struggle to break the chains that make us slaves. To leave the solution of our problems to the educated and rich is to put ourselves voluntarily in their clutches. We, the plebians [sic]; we, the tatterdemalions; we, the starvelings; we who have no place wherein to lay our heads and live tortured by uncertainty as to whence will come tomorrow's bread for our women and little ones; we, who when we have reached old age, are ignominiously discharged because we can no longer work; it is for us to make powerful efforts and a thousand sacrifices to destroy to its lowest foundations the edifice of the old society which has been a fond mother to the rich and vicious and a hard-hearted stepmother to the workers and the virtuous.

All the ills that afflict humanity spring from the existing system which compels the majority to toil and sacrifice

itself that a privileged minority may satisfy its wants and even its caprices while living in ease and vice.

The evil would be less if all the poor were guaranteed work, but production is not regulated for the satisfaction of the needs of the workers but for what the bourgeoisie want, and they so manage things that it shall not exceed their capacity of expenditure. Hence the periodic stoppage of industry, or restriction of the number of workers, which proves also how perfect is the machinery operated for the advantage of the rich by the proletariat.

To make an end of all this it is necessary that the workers take into their own hands the land and the machinery of production, so that they themselves may regulate the production of wealth in accordance with their own needs.

Robbery, prostitution, assassination, incendiarism, swindling -- these are the products of the system that places men and women in conditions in which, that they may not die of hunger, they find themselves obliged to take where they can or prostitute themselves; for, in the majority of cases, even though they have the greatest desire to work, no work is to be had or it is so badly paid that there is no getting the sum necessary to satisfy the most imperious necessities of the individual and his family. Moreover, the long hours of work under the present capitalist system, and the conditions under which it is carried on, in a short time make an end of the worker's health and even of his life. These industrial catastrophes have their origin solely in the contempt with which the capitalist class looks on those who sacrifice themselves for it.

Irritated as is the poor man by the injustice of which he is the victim; angered by the luxury flaunted in his face by

those who do nothing; beaten on the street by the policeman for the crime of being poor; compelled to hire out his labour on tasks distasteful to him; badly remunerated; despised by all who know more than he does or who, having money, think themselves the superiors of those who have none; having in prospect an old age of bitter sorrow and the death of an animal turned out of the stable as unserviceable; disquieted from day to day by the possibility of being without work; obliged to regard as enemies even the members of his own class, since he knows not who among them will offer his services for less than he himself is earning -- it is natural that in such circumstances there should be developed in the human being anti-social instincts and that crime, prostitution, and disloyalty should be the inevitable fruits of the old and hateful system we are trying to destroy, to its very lowest roots, that we may create in its stead a new one of love, of equality, of justice, of fraternity, of liberty.

Rise, all of you, as one man! In the hands of all are tranquility [sic], well-being, liberty, the satisfaction of all healthy appetites. But we must not leave ourselves to the guidance of directors. Let each be master of himself. Let all be arranged by the mutual consent of free individualities. Death to slavery! Death to hunger! Long life to "Land and Liberty!"

Mexicans! With hand on heart and with a tranquil conscience we formally and solemnly appeal to you all, men and women alike, to embrace the lofty ideals of the Mexican Liberal Party. As long as there are rich and poor, governors and governed, there will be no peace, nor is it to be desired that there should be; for such a peace would be founded on the political, economic and social inequality of millions of human beings who suffer hunger, outrages, the

prison and death, while a small minority enjoys pleasures and liberties of all kinds for doing nothing. On with the struggle! On with expropriation, for the benefit of all and not of the few! This is no war of bandits, but of men and women who desire that all may be brothers and enjoy, as such, the good things to which nature invites us and which the brawn and intelligence of man have created, the one condition being that each should devote himself to truly useful work.

Liberty and well-being are within our grasp. The same effort and the same sacrifices that are required to raise to power a governor -- that is to say, a tyrant -- will achieve the expropriation of the fortunes the rich keep from you. It is for you, then, to choose. Either a new governor -- that is to say, a new yoke -- or life-redeeming expropriation and the abolition of all imposition, be that imposition religious, political or of any other kind.

LAND AND LIBERTY!

Signed in the city of Los Angeles, State of California,  
United States of America, September 23, 1911.

Ricardo Flores Magon  
Anselmo L. Figueroa  
Librado Rivera  
Enrique Flores Magon  
Antonio de P. Aruajo

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## **GOVERNMENT?**

(¿Gobierno?)

**RICARDO FLORES MAGON**

Regeneracion, February 12, 1914.

There are people, who in good faith ask this question: how would it be possible to live without government? And they conclude saying that a supreme chief, a crowd of officials, large and small, such as ministers, judges, magistrates, legislators, soldiers, jailers, policemen, and executioners, are necessary.

These good people believe that without authority we would all turn ourselves over to excesses, the result being that the weak would always be the victim of the strong.

This could happen only in this case: that the revolutionaries, through a weakness of the guillotine, would leave afoot social inequality. Social inequality is the fountain of all the antisocial acts that the law and the bourgeois consider crimes with theft being the most common of those crimes. Well, when all mankind will have the opportunity to work the land or to dedicate itself, without the need to work for salary, to be able to survive, who will take theft as a profession the way it is seen now? In the society that the libertarians long for, land and all methods of production will no longer be objects of speculation for a determined number of proprietors instead they will be the common property of



the workers and as before there will be only one class: that of the workers with the right of all to produce and consume in common, what need would there be to steal?

It will be said that there are persons given to idleness and that they would take advantage of another's work to live instead of working. I have lived in different prisons; I have spoken with many thieves, with hundreds of thieves; almost all of them have stolen out of necessity. There is no constant work: salaries are meager, the working day of laborers is truly exhausting; the scorn of the proprietary class for the proletariat class is irritating; the example of living in idleness, luxury, abundance, in the vice of doing nothing useful that the capitalist class gives to the working class, all of this causes some workers, out of starvation, indignation, or as an individual protest against the plunder of the bourgeois, to rob and they become criminals, to the point of murder, to take what is necessary to live.

The profession of theft is definitely not one of the happiest. It requires great activity and waste of energy on the part of the thief, major activity and major energy that in many cases is required to recover some task; so to complete a theft, the thief has to stake out his victim, study his practices, be careful of policemen, plan a map, risk his life or freedom, in continued anxiety, without limit in this case of work, and assume that a man does not come to him for happiness, but instead forced by necessity or the anger of seeing himself in misery, when the rich pass by his side intoxicated by wine, luxury, his mouth twisted with the hiccups of satiation, dressed in suedes and fine clothes, enveloping in one scornful look the poor people who sacrifice in the workshop, the factory, the mine, the furrow . . .

The immense majority of the jail population is composed of individuals who have committed a misdemeanor against property: theft, swindling, fraud, falsification, etcetera, while in a small minority of delinquents, prisoners with crimes against people, are found. Once private property is abolished, when one will have all of the means to choose a job of one's liking, but beneficial to the community; humanizing the work in a virtue that will not effect the patron and make him rich, but to satisfy necessities; returning to the industry the thousands and thousands of day laborers that today corner the government in its offices, in the districts, and the prisons themselves; all will be put to work to gain sustenance, with the powerful help of machinery of all kinds, it will be necessary to work only some two or three hours daily to have everything in abundance. Would there then be those who prefer theft to be able to live? Man, although the most perverse, always likes to attract the esteem of all. This can be observed today, although the way in which humanity lives weakens the best instincts of the species, and if it is so, why not admit that man would be better in the cavity of a free society?

In referring to the crimes against people, the major part is the product of the sickness in which we live. Man lives in a constant state of nervous over excitement; the misery, the insecurity of winning the bread of the next morning; the offenses of authority; the certainty that he is victim of political tyranny and capitalist exploitation; the desperation of seeing the child without clothes, education, future; the spectacle, nothing constructed of the struggle of all against all, that is born specifically of the right of private property, that facilitates the shrewd

and the malicious to accumulate capital by exploiting the workers; all of that and much more fills the heart of man with bitterness, makes him violent, angry, and nudges him to take out a revolver or dagger to attack, many times for trivial issues. No society exists in which savage rivalry between human beings satisfies all necessities, soothes sufferings, softens tempers, and strengthens in them the instincts of sociability and solidarity. All of which are so strong that, in spite of worldly disputes of all against all, they have not died in human beings.

No, there is no need to fear life without government; we long for it with all of our hearts. There would be, naturally, some individuals given to criminal instincts; but politics would take charge of attending to them, as ill as they are, because those poor people are victims of [atavismos], illnesses inherited of inclinations born of anger from the injustice and brutality of the environment.

Mexicans: remember how the rural populations of Mexico have lived. Communism has been practiced in the rural huts; authority has not been missed; before, to the contrary, when it was known that an agent of authority was coming near, the men would flee to the forest because authority is only present when men are needed for the barracks or for contributions to maintain the parasites of the government and nevertheless life was more tranquil in those places where laws were not known nor the threat of the gendearme with his club.

Authority is not missed except to maintain social inequality.

Mexicans: Death to Authority!

Long Live Land and Liberty!

Ricardo Flores Magon

## **WITHOUT BOSSES**

(Sin Jefes)

**RICARDO FLORES MAGON**

Regeneracion, March 21, 1914.

To want bosses and at the same time to want to be free is to want the impossible. It is necessary to choose once and for all between two things: either to be free, completely free, refusing all authority, or to be enslaved perpetuating the power of man over man.

The boss or government is necessary only under a system of economic inequality. If I have more than Pedro, I naturally fear that Pedro will grab me by the neck and will take from me what he needs. In this case, I need a government or a supervisor to protect me against the possible attacks of Pedro; but if Pedro and I are economic equals; if we both have the same opportunity to profit from the riches of nature, such as land, water forests, mines, and everything else, just as the riches created by the hand of man, like the machineries, houses, railroads, and the thousand and one manufacturers, reason says that it would be impossible that Pedro and I would grab each other by the hair to dispute the things that we both profit from equally and in this case there is no need to have bosses.

To talk of bosses between equals is a contradiction, unless we speak of equals in servitude, brothers in chains, as we workers are now.

There are many who say that it is impossible to live without bosses or government; if it is the bourgeois that say such things, I admit they are right in their reasoning because they fear that the poor will seize them by the neck and will snatch away their riches that they have amassed by making the worker sweat; but for what do the poor need bosses or government?

In Mexico, we have had and have hundreds of proofs that humankind does not need bosses or government if not in the case of economic inequality. In the rural villages and communities, the people have not felt it necessary to have a government. Until recently, the land, forests, water, and fields have been common property of the people of the region. When government is spoken of to those simple people, they start to tremble because for them government is the same as an executioner; it signifies the same as tyranny. They live happily in their freedom, without knowing, in many cases, the name of the President of the Republic, and they only know of the existence of a government when the military chiefs pass through the region looking for men to convert into soldiers, or when the federal tax collector comes to collect taxes. The government was, then, to a large part of the Mexican population, the tyrant that pulled the working men out of their homes to convert them into soldiers, or to savagely exploit that they would snatch away the tax in the name of the tax authority.

Would these populations feel the need to have government? They needed it for nothing and they could live in that way for hundreds of years, until the natural riches were snatched away for the benefit of the neighboring landholders. They did not eat one another,

the way that those who have only known the capitalist system feared would happen; a system in which each man has to compete with everyone else to put a piece of bread in his mouth; the strong do not exert tyranny over the weak, as happens under a capitalist civilization, in which the most idle, greedy, and clever rule over the honest and good. All were brothers in these communities; they all helped out, and sensing equality, the way it really was, they did not need authorities to watch over the interests of those who had them, fearing possible attacks of those who did not have.

In these moments, for what do the free communities of the Yaqui of Durango, of the South of Mexico and so many other areas in which the people have taken possession of the land, need government? From the moment that they consider themselves equals, with the same right to the Mother Earth, they do not need a boss to protect the privileged against those without privileges, because all are privileged.

Let us open our eyes, proletariats: the government should only exist when there is economic inequality. Adopt then, as a moral guide, the Manifesto of September 23, 1911.

Ricardo Flores Magon

## **IDEAS**

(Sembrando)

**RICARDO FLORES MAGON**

### **THE SOWER OF IDEAS' BEAUTIFUL SEED**

Federal Prison. Leavenworth, Kansas, 2 May, 1922.-Miss. Irene Benton.-  
Granada, Minnesota.

My dear comrade:

Isn't it a shame not to answer your letter since the 10th of last month? But I am not free, my dear friend, to write more than three letters a week. You know this, and I hope you will excuse my apparent negligence.

Your letter, so perfectly well calculated, to diffuse some warmth to my afflicted soul, was effective in its generous mission, and especially in the last part, where you say that your dear mother speaks to you about me; it touched the most delicate fibers of my heart, and it moved me to tears, because I thought about my own mother, dead after so many years. It's been 21 years! I was in prison during that time, punished for having denounced the bloody tyranny of Porfirio Díaz, and because of this, I could not be at her bedside. I could not give her my last kiss, nor hear her last words. This happened in México City, the 14th of June, 1900, some three years before my coming to this country as a political refugee in search of freedom. My thanks to you and to your dear mother for your affection for me, as expressed in your beautiful letter. Your recounting about the realization of the work in the fields and the one in



preparation, is most interesting, as you have no idea how much I love the countryside, the forest, the mountains. "The men, you say, have been busy in the fields, preparing the soil to receive the seed. What world of emotions and thoughts provoke those few words in me, as I have also been a sower, although a sower of ideas! And I have also felt what the sower of seeds has felt in the generous depths of the earth, and I trust much more in the minds of my fellow man, and we both hope...and the agony he suffers with his waiting is also my torment. The most minute indications of ill fate crushes our heart, holding our breath, waiting for the crack of the crush of the ground, showing that the seed has sprouted, and I, with my compressed heart, wait for the word, the action, the gesture that indicates the germination of the seed in a fertile mind...The only difference between a sower of seeds and the sower of ideals resides in the time and the way of working; as with the first, has all night to rest and relax the tension from his limbs, and also waits until the season is favorable for his seedtime and only plants where the ground is generous; the latter does not have nights, nor seasons, all of the grounds deserve attention and work; plant in the spring as in the summer, day and night, night and day; in all seasons, under the heavens and anything that can be the quality of the mind; outside of time... Even when the lightning thunders in the heavens, where resides the arbiter of human destinies.

The sower of ideals does not stop his work, he continues toward a future looking with the eyes of the spirit, sowing, always sowing. Threatening fists, and all around may tremble and burn with the hate that emits from those whose interests benefit, leaving without cultivation of the minds of the masses...The sower of ideals does not draw back, the sower of ideals continues to sow,

always sowing...far and close, here and there, under pale heavens illuminated by a yellow sun that, projecting his gloomy silhouettes against frowning horizons, feeling a presentiment of plalafarms over the floor, agitating its sinister arms like antennas of monstrous creatures created by fever or fed by madness, while huge black iron doors sleepily yawn for flesh and soul...The sower does not draw back, the sower continues planting, and this has been his task since immemorial time, this has been his fate, yet way before our race emerged dignified and erect from the wild forest, where since the beginning in the course of time, close to other quadrupeds and with the rest of the fauna of the quadrupeds, because the sower of ideals has always had a mission of combat, but serene and majestic, with an ample movement of arms, so ample that it seems to trace in the hostile air the orbit of the sun, faithfully sowing the seed, causing humanity to advance, regardless of obstacles, toward the future that he sees with the eyes of the spirit.

Your letter is so sweet...! Oh, my dear comrade! You are so gentle, like your mother. Yes, your affection calms me, it give me much happiness; thank you a million times. The clippings are very interesting and the drawings very cute. Now, good-bye!

I gave Rivera your message; he is very grateful.  
Fraternally yours,

Ricardo FLORES MAGON

IN THE MANNER OF PREFACE: THE DEATH OF  
RICARDO FLORES MAGON

Ricardo Flores Magón is dead. Generally the news of a death affects me less, but in this case it has been quite contrary. It is not because, after long years of prison and exile, this indomitable freedom fighter has died in prison. A feeling much greater than compassion or personal affection dominates me. For reasons I cannot analyze, this death appears to me as the synopsis of a period and brings about ideas and feelings I find difficult to express with words. I have the sensation that a force, that was essential, has stopped working.

It appears to me that all those who had intimate relations with Ricardo Flores Magón will feel the same as I. Something placed a special seed in him, giving him definite character, regardless of the conditions he was in: he always remained being someone, a strength that had to be recognized, a personality who could not be ignored. Even the staff from the Court of Justice and from the penitentiary, who, because of their unnatural instincts, considered him a violation of the law, I felt, were very much aware of this fact, when I discussed this matter with them.

I believe it was so, because the man was profoundly sincere, so firm in his convictions, that anyone else could have been subjected, reduced to silence, but he had to talk: so firm was his determination to be part in this great fight for the destruction of human slavery, the one, he personally, had to combat and fought until his last moment. He hated oppression, anyone, from the Government or the monopoly of the land, to the religious superstition or high finances.

As a Mexican, he knew how this had ruined the life of his own country; as an anarchist, he understood that this was the fate of the disinherited, to those who had consented to be reduced to the impotence in all the world.

In our greater part there periodically surges a just indignation, but Magón seemed to me a volcano who never slept.

If I recall, it was in San Luis Potosí, about thirty years ago, where Ricardo Flores Magón, then a young journalist, obtained prominence. Frankly said, he reached it by a leap: The Liberal Party had a convention, and, in accordance with their traditions, was directing all their accusations toward the Catholic Church; Ricardo, according to the version I knew, literally overwhelmed the convention with a speech, in which he attacked Porfirio Díaz, omnipotent dictator of México to Wall Street, who was, consequently, the real origin of all the wrongs of the country.

The special reason for the case, in reality, consisted in that, during that time, the attacks against the Church were popular and certain, while an unprecedented attack on Díaz was full of dangers. This brought to Ricardo the friendship of Librado Rivera, who from then on, participated, according to his destiny, and today lives in the prison of Leavenworth; making him, his brother Enrique, and Librado Dictator Díaz's target of anger. The trio, however, initiated and rushed with great activity an agitation to the determined point, until after many imprisonments, they understood that they could not live in México anymore, so they emigrated to the

United States. They started the fire. With daring boldness they had started the economic movement which subsequently threw Díaz to exile. The way I see things, the real man is always the motor of movement; but the road he opens always drives him to the cross.

I am completely sure that Ricardo Flores Magón previously anticipated this with caution, because in his conversation he stoically accepted it as the price that he had to pay. With some frequency he allowed himself to be greatly swayed over his affinities or his antipathies, and rarely could he find a virtue in his adversaries, but in fundamental problems he would always find it just because he never wanted to abandon the fundamental facts. Repeatedly, I considered his sentences unjust, but I frequently observed that the men he had criticized in the past, were the ones, as time passed, who changed into the politicians Magón had predicted. He was the most aggressive and positive fighter, and he acquired friends and enemies by the hundreds.

I got interested in Magón, reading the "México Bárbaro," by John Kenneth Turner; but it was his passionate hate toward a social system that seems to think only about the dollar, which I openly was attracted to. For many years, my most firm conviction has been that the cult for the golden calf, in the greatest wall the ascendant progress has, and that humanity is obligated to carry out, in regards to the intellectual conquests of recent centuries. I have found many men and women who share this concept with me; however, none so saturated as the one from Magón. I believe Ricardo was fully persuaded that the worst fate for México would be to fall under the yoke of Wall Street. The real fact he saw, was that all humanity was strapped to the wheels of

the Powerful Money's Carriage, brutally triumphant and needing to liberate herself, or die. I, myself, believe this fact. My study of the Mexican Revolution and my contemplation of the way plutocracy from there had taken from México all that had values, changed ideas that before were theories, into unbending convictions. Ricardo Flores Mágon was one of the most powerful writers who the Revolution produced. Except for the time he allowed deplorable polemics, he did not waste his time in pettiness; he always touched the main cords with extraordinary firmness. In all the course of his work he would stress the most powerful emotions to the heroic: he asked much of men. I doubt he had knowledge of the writings of Nietzsche; however, he appeared to be another Nietzsche, except for the fact that he was democratic. Nevertheless, in such characters there is always a parallel force: both insist on the best; in the realization of his respective ideal with all forthrightness, and for this realization, no sacrifice was too big.

I have no desire to write a biography or a praise, and I limit myself to some personal reminiscences which give profound recognition about the man. I remember that, having been forewarned that was tentatively persecuted, he refused to hide in a secure place, "because the movement would disorganize." When, and after many months we had him out prison, under protection, he went directly to the office of "Regeneración" and he had worked for one hour, one more time, with the enormous correspondence to which he dedicated eight hours a day; I never found as active a propagandist, except for his brother Enrique. He lived modestly, and to my knowledge, he had no vices. In fact, he had no time for them.

On my first visit to the offices of "Regeneración," I observed a big parcel box, and then learned that it only contained flyers of "The Conquest of Pan," by Kropotkin, to be mailed to México. For years, these men continued to follow this work, sapping with infinite tenacity and great sacrifice because of their limited resources. Their great idea was the development of revolutionary personalities. They had great admiration for Kropotkin, which in my opinion, was just.

When I substituted John Kenneth Turner as editor of the English section of "Regeneración," its circulation was about 27,000 copies and the newspaper had to make money; but all was spent on advertising. We had between 600 and 700 newspapers in our exchange lists, and we received a lot of news from the "Latino World." Our wish was to unify the Latin opinion in México, and Central and South America, against the plutocratic invasion, and the creation in the United States a very strong sentiment maintaining the perpetuated threat of intervention.

I believe that Ricardo considered the latter as the main work of "Regeneración" and that, for this reason, he opposed the move of the newspaper to México, which I urgently requested a while back.

In the book "The Real México," Mr. Hamilton Fife, today editor of the "Daily Herald," but prior a distinguished traveling correspondent, treats the unexpected fall of Porfirio Díaz, renown in the United States as a great power of the first order, with a strong regard for his rear guard. Mr. Fife observes that Díaz forgot one important factor: a gentleman by the name of

Ricardo Flores Magón. I have always seen this observation as correct, and I have considered Magón's men as those who really moved the power that definitively threw Díaz to exile. I considered it a great win, and a true success--one that epochs are made of. Díaz was the man who, as William Archer said, had sold his country for bagatelle, with the abandon of a child making soap bubbles. His overthrow was the first failure that the plutocracy from the North found in its march toward the South.

When Madero succeeded Díaz as President, he named Magón's brother, Jesús, Secretary of State; and it was then, known news, when Jesús made several efforts to induce Ricardo and Enrique to return to México, assuring them complete security and fast improvement in position. They were poor, having been subjected to repeated persecutions and imprisonments, as inconvenient agitators of plutocratic peace; and in spite of that, they decidedly refused their brother's offers.

It always seemed known to me. It could have been difficult, perhaps impossible, for us to understand the maneuvers of the Mexican way of thinking and the methods of the men, with their Indian blood; however, what is deeply inherited and cannot be denied is that these men--Ricardo and Enrique Flores Magón, and Librado Rivera, who are still in the prison at Leavenworth--were fanatically loyal to their anarchist convictions.

Well, Ricardo Flores Magón has died, and surely, after a life of feverish activity, he sleeps tranquilly; neither praise nor criticism can affect him now. He died in the penitentiary at Leavenworth, where he had five years of



the fiery sentence of the twenty he was given for writing articles that damaged the recruitment. He had been suffering for some years from diabetes, and during his last days, he completely lost his sight. He could have bought his freedom by confessing his regret; but this confession was impossible for a man of his nature. In the past months the organized workers from México had been agitating for Ricardo's liberty, and, upon learning of his death, the Capital's Parliament ordered the tribune to mourn.

The Governor requested to bring back his mortal remains, to give a dignified burial to the one who, when alive, was an incessant fighter for the cause of the emancipation of the masses of México, who, in addition to the whole world, still needed to win; but his comrades had respected his principles and had declined the funeral offered to be paid for by the Governor.

We hope that, inspired by the example of this indomitable fighter, the people of the United States can straighten up and demand freedom for the many political prisoners, martyrs because of their freedom of conscience, who now rest in the galleys of that country. Such a deed would be the most appropriate monument to the life and to the memory of Ricardo Flores Magón.

William C. OWEN.

(From "Freedom," London, December 1922.)

## THE APOSTAL

**RICARDO FLORES MAGON**

Crossing fields, crossing highways, stepping over the thorns, walking between the rocky highlands, consumed by the ravenously thirsty dryness in his mouth--that is how the Revolutionary Delegate goes on his intended undertaking of persuading--under the avenging sun, it seemed, daringly hurling him with its fierce flames; but the Delegate does not stop; he does not want to waste a minute. From some shacks come out rotten mean dogs, to chase him, as hostile as the miserable dwellers of those shacks, laughing stupidly, ignoring the apostal, who brings them the good news.

The Delegate moves forward; he wants to get to that group of nice little houses close to the bottom of the high mountain, where he has been told there are some comrades. The heat of the sun is unbearable; hunger and thirst debilitate him as much as the tiring walk; but his lucid mind has the fresh idea as clear as the water from the mountain, beautiful as a flower, where there is no place for the threat of the tyrant. So is the idea: immune to oppression.

The Delegate walks, walks. The deserted fields oppress his heart. How many families could live in abundance if all this land would not be controlled by a few ambitious people! The Delegate follows his way; a snake rattles under the dusty bush; the crickets fill the noisy rumor of the hot ambient; a cow moos from afar.

Finally, the Delegate arrives at the village, where--he has been told--there are comrades. The dogs, alarmed,

bark. From the doors of the small houses, indifferent faces lean out. There is a group of men and women under a porch. The apostal approaches; the men see him and contract their eyebrows; the women see him with distrust.

"Good afternoon, comrades," says the Delegate.

The group looks at each other. Nobody answers the greeting. The apostal does not give up, and again says:

"Comrades, the propagandist continues, the tyranny is swaying; strong men have taken arms to demolish it, and only we hope that all of us, without exception, help in any manner we can those who fight for freedom and justice."

The women yawn; the men scratch their heads; a hen crosses between the group, followed by a rooster.

"Friends"--continues the indefatigable propagandist of the good news--"liberty requires sacrifices; your life is hard; you have no satisfaction; the future of your children is uncertain. Why are you indifferent before the abnegation of the ones who have thrown themselves into the struggle on behalf of your happiness, to free you, so your little children would be happier than you? Help, help however you can, give part of your salaries to promote the Revolution, or bear to arms if you so prefer; but do something for the cause, at least propagate the ideals of the insurrection."

The Delegate pauses. An eagle passes, swaying in the clear sky, as if it could have been a symbol of the

thought of that man who, being among human swine, would keep himself very high, very pure, very white.

Bugs, buzzing, in and out of the mouth of a sleeping old man. Men, visibly worried, were coming, one by one; the women had all left. Finally, the Delegate is left alone with the old man who is sleeping away his drunkenness and a dog that furiously bites the flies that suck his coat. Not even a penny had come out from those sordid pockets, not even glass of water had been offered to that answering man, who, casting a compassionate look to that egoistic and stupid den, started to walk toward another shack. When he passed in front of a tavern, he could see those miserable men he had spoken to, drinking huge glasses of wine, giving the bourgeoisie what they did not give to the Revolution, clinching the chains of their children, with their indifference and selfishness.

The news of the coming of the apostal had extended around the whole town, and, the alerted dwellers closed their doors when the Delegate would approach.

Meanwhile, a man, who appeared to be a worker, came heaving towards the police office.

"Sir," said the man to the police officer, "how much do you pay for handing over a revolutionary?"

"Twenty reales," said the officer.

The dealing was done; Judas had lowered the tariff. Moments later, the man, tied elbow to elbow, was pushed to jail. He fell, and by kicking him out, was lifted by the executioner, amongst the laughing, drunken

slaves. Some kids were enjoying throwing handfuls of dirt into the eyes of the martyr, who was no other than the apostal, the one that had crossed fields, traveled highways, over hawthorn, pebbly land, dried, thirsty mouth devouring him, but with a lucid, clear mind, carrying with him the idea of regeneration for the human race, by way of comfort and freedom.

(From "Regeneración," number 19, dated January 7, 1911.)

## VOLUNTARY SLAVERY

### **RICARDO FLORES MAGON**

Juan and Pedro came to age at the precise age to start working to survive. They were sons of workers, who died not having the opportunity to acquire formal education to free them from the chains of salary. But Juan was spirited. He had read in newspapers how some men, born from humble beginnings, had come to be, with work and thrift, become financial kings, and dominate, with the power of money, not only in the market place, but in the world. He had read thousands of anecdotes of the Vanderbilts, the Rockefellers, the Rothchilds, the Carnegies, and all of those whom, according to La Prensa, and some school reading books, with the stupidities of our contemporary childhood, are abreast of world finances, not because of anything else, -oh, despicable lies-but the dedication to work and the devotion to save.

Juan tenaciously threw himself into his work. He worked a year, and found himself as poor as the first day. At the turn of the following year, he found himself in the same circumstances. He kept on working more, without dismay, without rest. Five years went by, and he found that, at the cost of sacrifices, he had saved some money-not too much. To save those coins, he had to minimize the expense of his nourishment, lowering his strength, dressed in rags, with the torment of heat and cold weather, his system wore out too; he lived in miserable shacks, and the unsanitary environment contributed to his weakness. But Juan kept on saving, saving money at the cost of his health. For every penny he was able to save, he lost strength. So in order to not pay rent, he bought a lot, and built a small home. Later,

he married a young girl. The court and the priest took away a big chunk of his savings, saved with so much sacrifice. Some years passed, but work was not steady, debts started to stress poor Juan. One day one of his children got sick, the doctor did not want to assist him since he had no money, and in the public dispensary, he was given such poor attention that the poor child died. Juan, however, did not give up. He would remember the writings he had read about the famous virtues of being thrifty and other foolishnesses of the kind. He had to be rich because he worked so hard, and saved. Didn't Rockefeller, himself, Carnegie and others, before millions, drool unconsciously? Meanwhile, basic necessities were costing more, making him worried. Groceries were costing more, and extremely limited the home of the innocent Juan, and, much to his concern, bills were increasing, and he could not save a penny. To add pain to injury, the owner, that morning, fired him from work. Occupying their places were new slaves, who, like the ones before, would dream with accumulated wealth, by hard work and savings. Juan had to pawn his home, with the hope to keep his dreams, but he was going down, sinking without help. He could not pay his debt, and had to leave it at the hands of the sharks, all the product of his sacrifice, that small lot saved for with his blood. Obstinate, Juan wanted to save more, but it was in vain. This deprivation to which he subjected himself, so he could save, the hard work he labored the best years of his life, had destroyed his vigor. Everywhere he asked for work, he was rejected, and there was no work for him. He was a machine to produce money for his employer, but very worn out. Old machines are seen with disdain. And, meanwhile, Juan's family suffered hunger. In the dark shack, there was no heat, no covers to protect them from the cold; the

children plead for bread with fury. Juan would go out everyday to look for work, but who wanted to hire tired old arms? And after walking all the city and the fields, he returned home, where they were waiting, sad and hungry, those loved ones, his wife, children, those loved ones who once dreamt about the wealth of the Rockefellers, the fortune of the Carnegies.

One afternoon, Juan stopped to contemplate the automobiles passing by, driven by fatty drivers, imagining the satisfaction of having a life without worries. Women chatting happily, and men, flattering syrupy and insignificantly, attending to them with mellifluous phrases that could make other women yawn with boredom if they had not been those bourgeoisie.

It was cold; Juan shivered, thinking about his family, what they could expect inside that dark shack, that mansion of misfortune. How could they shiver in that cold weather, that very moment; suffering the indescribably torture from famine; how bitter the tears shed those very moments! The elegant parade continued. It was the perfect moment for the rich to show off, just from whom Juan had learned "to work and save," like the Rothchilds, like the Carnegies, like the Rockefellers. A great gentleman was coming in a luxurious car. His presence was magnificent. Gray hair, but his face looked young. Juan cleaned his eyes, rubbing them, worried to be a victim of an illusion. No, no, his old and tired eyes did not fool him; that great man was Pedro, his childhood comrade. "How much had he worked and saved," thought Juan, "so he could get out of his misery, and reach such a level, and gain so much distinction." Oh, poor Juan! He has not been able to forget the imbecilic stories about the vampire of humanity; he



could not forget what he had read in school books, in what conscientiously stupefies the population.

Pedro had not worked. A man without scruples. And with great malice, he had become aware that honesty is not a fountain of wealth, so he started cheating his fellow man. As soon as he pooled some savings, he installed a shop and hired cheap labor; so he went up, up. He widened his shop, and hired more help, more and more, and he became a millionaire and a great man, thanks to the many "Juans" who carefully took the advice from the bourgeoisie.

Juan continued watching the parade of the lazy and the indolent. At the next corner a man was preaching to the townsmen. There were a few people, really, but this orator, who was he? What did he say? Juan went to listen:

"Comrades," exclaimed the man, "the time has come to reflect. Capitalists are thieves. Only by bad tricks can one become a millionaire. The poor drop down, working, and when we cannot work anymore, we are fired by the bourgeoisie, as leaving a tired and old horse from service. Let's bare arms to conquer our welfare and for our families!"

Juan saw the man with disdain, spit on the floor with anger, and walked to the obscure shack, where his loved ones waited sad, hungry, and cold. He could not let his idea die, that saving and work make the man virtuous. Not even the undeserving, who deserved misfortune from his fellow man, could make the miserable soul educated to be a slave, nor could he recognize his mistake.

(From "Regeneración," number 21, dated January 21st,  
1911.)

BAH, A DRUNK!

**RICARDO FLORES MAGON**

That beautiful morning was probably the saddest for this poor man suffering from tuberculosis. The sun was brilliantly shining, giving enrichment with golden splendor, to the beautiful city of Los Angeles.

A few weeks ago, Santiago had been fired from his job. He was terminally ill from TB, and the "nice" bourgeoisie, who exploited him for years, had the nerve to throw him to the street, as soon as he realized that the weak arms of his slave could not give him the previous profits.

When Santiago was young, he worked zealously. He used to dream: to earn a "good" salary and to be able to save some money, to be able to make it easier the last days of his life.

Santiago saved. He "tightened" his belt and accumulated some coins; however, each coin he saved meant privation, in such a way that if the savings were increasing, the arteries of his body had less blood.

"I will not save anymore," Santiago said courageously one day, when he realized his health was declining. In fact, he did not save anymore, and, so in fact, he could prolong his agony. The salary increased, this was no doubt-it increased. Some labor strikes, produced by his own union members, had produced these increased wages, but of course, if wages were better than before, basic merchandise prices had top cost, so that the advantage gained by the suffering from the strikes was

deceptive, resulting in hunger and coldness at home, lines of policemen, even jail and death from the encounter with the strike suppressers.

Years went by, salaries went on the rise and so did the cost of bare necessities, at the same time Santiago's family would augment. Work hours had been reduced to eight, thanks to the strikes; however, and again "the butts"-the tasks to carry out had to be done in the same eight hours-the same that before were performed in ten or twelve hours, so he had to use all of his skill, strength, all of his life experience acquired as a worker, to be able to deliver. The cold "lunch," gulped down in a few minutes at noon, the nervous tension to which he submitted his body, so as not to loosen the machine's movement; the dirt, lack of ventilation of the shop, the unbearable noise of the machines, the poor nutrition he could possibly get, because of lack of provisions; the poor room where he slept with his numerous family, without fire, without comfortable clothes, the lack of tranquillity overwhelming his spirit, as he thought about the future of his family; everything, all, was in conspiracy against his own health. He thought of saving again, with the hope to leave something to his family when he died. But, what could he save? He limited the household expenses to the extreme limit, as he saw dreadfully that the pink cheeks of his little children had disappeared, and so was he, himself, feeling famished.

Santiago realized his dilemma, that if one is not made of iron, nobody knows what to do: save at the cost of the health of your loved ones, so one could leave them a few coins at the time of one's death, maybe money to be spent in medications to combat the anemia of his offspring, or not save so he could feed his family better

and be without anything, penniless when he would go. Then he would think of the helplessness of his family, maybe prostitution of his little daughters, the "crime" his loved sons would commit, to get a piece of bread, and the sadness of his noble spouse.

Meanwhile tuberculosis had advanced in his beaten body. His friends fled from him, afraid of contamination from the sickness. The bourgeoisie would retain him at the shop as he could still work, and as could labor, he could get good sums of money from the unfortunate slave.

The time arrived, nevertheless, the moment when Santiago was not useful, neither for God nor for the Devil, and that bourgeois who used to pat his back when he was tired, after leaving the shop in the afternoon, after making his boss richer, and his health poorer, fired him, as it was not profitable to leave him at the shop; he was not producing anymore.

With tears in his eyes, Santiago arrived at home one afternoon, when nature and all things smiled. Children played in the street; birds pecked here and there the asphalt; dogs with intelligent and smart eyes, watching people walk around, unable to guess the sorrow or happiness of the human hearth. Horses swept with their tails, from the persistent flies bothering their polished legs; the newspaper boys would amuse the scenery with their yelling and their roguishness; the sun was setting in a purple bed. So much beauty everywhere! So much sadness in Santiago's home!

Between accession of cough, deep sighs and moving sobs, Santiago told his loyal wife the sad news: "Tomorrow we will not have bread..."

Oh, kingdom of social inequality, you take so long to arrive!

Everything that could be pawned went to the pawnshop; this is what you call these caves of thieves protected by...the law! To the pawnshop one went, and all the few small jewelry they have had, going from parent to children of the poor race; to the pawnshop went those shawls his mother-in-law displayed when young, and which were treasured as dear relics; to the pawnshop went that beautiful painting, the only luxury from the room that was, at the same time, kitchen, dining room, living room, and...bedroom; to the pawnshop went the humble clothes they owned.

The illness in the meantime, not losing time: much advanced, worked without tire, eating up Santiago's lungs. Black masses would be expelled from the patient's mouth on each access of his cough. The malnutrition, sadness, and lack of medical attention, dragged the patient to his tomb, as so it is said. There was no other choice but to get into that prison, in that hateful, mediocre welfare, into which the bourgeoisie condemn humans who have produced so many beautiful things, and so much richness, so many good deeds, for such a pittance that can be obtained with such a damned salary.

To the hospital he went with his skin and his bones, the unfortunate Santiago; meanwhile his noble companion went from one factory to another and workshop to

workshop imploring to any scrooge to exploit her arms. Until when, disinherited brothers, would you decide to overthrow the iniquity of the actual capitalistic system?

At the hospital, he lasted a few days...was helplessly declared by the doctors, his illness was terminal, and he was confined to the incurable ward. No medicines, poor nutrition, no medical care; this is what charity did for our sick patient, while the bourgeoisie, who exploited him all his life, would carelessly squander, in going out on sprees, from the coins earned at the sake of that poor man's health.

Santiago requested to be released from the hospital. There was no reason to be a prisoner, and during that beautiful morning, that perhaps was the saddest of this poor afflicted man's life, a policeman dragged him, "as a vagrant," through a public park, going like this, from one prison to another.

The lovely Californian sun was shining intensely. The beautiful avenues flourished with well-dressed people and happy faces; puppies happier than millions of human beings resting in the arms of pretty and elegant bourgeoisie women, shopping while Santiago, in the police car, would hear once in a while this exclamation: "Bah, a drunk!"

(From "Regeneración," number 35, dated April 29th, 1911.)

## EXPROPRIATION

### **RICARDO FLORES MAGON**

The night before all peons had reunited. That was not possible to bear; the bosses had never been more insolent, neither so demanding. It was necessary for that treatment to end. The man who had been talking with them a week before, was right: the owners were the first bandits that, with the excuse to civilize them they had reached the point of war, taking their land from the Indians, their ancestors, to make them peons. What a life they had dragged for centuries! They had to accept corn and beans full of bugs, to eat--they, the ones who harvested fresh and abundant crops! Did a head of cattle die in the field? That was the only time they would taste meat, spoiled by then; the same for which the boss would make them pay higher than market prices. Were these pretty women among them slaves? The boss and his sons had the right to rape them. If a slave complained? He would go straight to the army to defend the same system which tyrannize him!

Just eight days before, a man had been with them, and nobody knew from where he had come; neither was it later known, where or when he had left. He was young; his hands, hard and strong, did not leave a doubt that he was a worker; but because of that strange fire in his eyes, one could tell something was burning inside that brow, sunburned from the outdoor and market with a frown giving him an air of an intelligent and reflective man. This man had spoken to them in this manner: "Brothers of misery, hold your heads high. We are equal human beings to the rest of humans habitating this earth. Our origin is humble, and the land, this old land, which



we have irrigated with our sweat, is our mother, and because of this, we have the right to be nourished from her, to give us wood for her forests, and water from her resources, without distinction, but with only one condition: that we fertilize her by loving her. The ones who claim to be owners of the earth are the real descendants of those bandits who, with blood and fire, stole from our ancestors, four centuries ago, when these incendiary actions occurred, killings galore, and savage rapers of minors, which History describes with the name 'Conquest of Mexico.' This land is ours, comrades; let us take her for us, and for all of our descendants!"

Since that day, nothing else was talked about among all the peons except to claim the land, to take it from the bosses by any way or form. The issue here was to take possession of the land, harvest the crops for themselves, discard the old owners and continue with the work from the hacienda, once and for all free from the leaches. From then on, all would be for the workers.

Since then, the masters started noticing that the peons did not take off their hats in their presence, and that there was some kind of dignified assurance in their look; they felt a catastrophe. When the humble raise their heads high, the arrogant will knock him down. The spirit of rebelliousness, for so many years asleep within the robust chests of the slaves, had been awakened by the sincere words of the propagator. There was conspiracy in the shacks. Together, around the fire, words from the young agitator were discussed in a low voice. "If the earth is our own mother," they said, "it must be ours." "But how can we own it?" the hesitant would ask. "We will ask the Government," the ones who appeared more sensible advised; but the younger ones, and women

above all, protested against those coward revolutions and voted for using violence. "Remember," the more excitable ones exclaimed, "how many times have we asked for justice or have protested against some infamy from our master. The Government has taken the best of our brothers to incarcerate them in the barracks and jails." And then, trying to recall each one of those men and women exposing examples of such nature, giving credibility to the hotheads. They would recall Juan, who was pulled out of his shack, late at night, and was executed when he had only walked about half a league from the little houses, only because he did not allow his master to abuse his wife. Spirits were becoming excited, remembering so many past infamies and talking about the present ones. A man said, "I lost my leg and arm fighting under the orders of Madero, and here I am, burdened with a large family, and not knowing if tomorrow I will have a piece of tortilla for my little children to eat." Another said, "Today the master ordered me to kill five hens I have in my chicken coop, and if I don't do it, he will take them anyway to the corral of his hacienda." Another one exposed, "Yesterday my daughter notified me that the young gentleman has threatened her to make his father send me to prison if she does not give him her body."

Similar conversations were had inside the other shacks. Hard work was mentioned and the miserable wages, and shivering, they would get close to the fire. However, they agreed to have a general meeting. It took place at night, in a nearby ravine. The cold was intense; but that human mass did not feel it; the desire for freedom was burning within their chests. The "sensible" wanted to send a commission to the Government, asking for land for all; but then the yelling would raise in loud screams:

"No, we do not want to deal with our executioners. Death to the Government, and death to the rich!" The women, carrying their children, would talk about hunger and nakedness, suffering, caused by the cowardice of the men. "No more hunger!" they would scream. "Let's take the hacienda!" yelling again. The owner appeared threatening; the rags floated in the wind as black flags of vengeance. The cliffs multiplied the intensity of that tremendous yelling. "To the home of the hacienda!" screamed some women, and started a rapid race towards the houses, from where the wind would bring the barking of the nervous dogs, as if guessing the grandiose act of social justice to end a few minutes later.

Men followed the women, who reached the houses, taking hoes, shovels, anything they found; and kept on going in the shadows, racing toward the house in the hacienda...

A close shooting received the attackers, but a few arrows "Regeneración," well directed, took the fort of the bourgeoisie in a few minutes, dying in those ruins, the descendants of the bandits who, with blood and fire, raping virginities, had stolen the land from the Indians four centuries ago...

When the flames of the fire ended, a clarity like rose petals, diluted in milk, started to appear in the East: the sun shone more brilliantly, more beautiful, happy to shine the foreheads of the free men, after many centuries of only shining the muddy backs of the human herd.

It was wonderful to see so many people. Some were dedicated to count cattle heads, others counting the number of people in the community; others were

ransacking stores and grain lofts (barns), and when the sun would set in the afternoon with the fiery clouds; when the birds would find refuge on tops of trees, all knew with what resources the community had, and now they were in agreement to start work on their own, and free, forever, of their masters.

(From "Regeneración," number 68, dated December 16, 1911.)

## REAPING

**RICARDO FLORES MAGON**

At the edge of the road, I find a man with weeping eyes and tossed black hair, staring at the thistle at his feet. "Why are you crying?" I ask, and he answers, "I cry because I did everything I could for my comrades. I sowed my parcel of land with hard work, as any man who respects himself must do; but those for whom I did so much good made me suffer, and in regard to my land, lacking water, that was snatched by the rich, only to produce those dry thistles you can see at my feet."

Bad harvest, I say, the one that the good ones harvest, as I continue my march.

A little farther I stumble with an old man falling and getting up, hunchback, sadly vague look. "Why are you so sad," I asked, and he responds, "I am sad because I have been working since I was seven years old. I was a dedicated person until the morning my boss said 'You are too old, Juan; there is no work for you to perform,' and he slammed the door on my face."

What a harvest of years and more years of honest labor! He told me and I keep on walking.

A very young man yet, but missing a leg, comes to my counter, hat in hand, asking "a bit of charity for the love of God," expressing somewhat similarly to a man. "Why are you moaning?" I ask, as he answers, "Maduro promised we were going to be free and happy, with the condition to help him get the presidency of the Republic. All my brothers and my own father died in the war; I

lost my leg and my health, leaving our families in poverty."

This is the reaping we the ones get, who work to raise tyrants, and support the capitalist system, I say to myself, and keep on walking. A few steps further, I encounter a group of tired men, sad steadfast looks, their arms dropped, reading dismay in their faces, and anguish, yet anger. "What makes you so angry?" I question. "We came out of the factory," they say, and after working ten hours, we only make enough for a miserable bean dinner."

These are not the ones who reap, I say, but their bosses do, so I continue with my travel.

It is nighttime already. Crickets sing their love songs in the crevices of the ground. My ear, attentive, perceives sounds of fiesta somewhere. I direct myself toward the place from where those gay sounds come, and I see myself in front of a sumptuous palace. "Who lives here?" I ask a lackey. "He is the lord-owner of these lands you see around here and owner also of the water which irrigates these lands."

I understand I am in front of the residence of the thief who made the fields become dry with thistle, and showing a fist to the beautiful structure of the palace, I think, "Your next harvest, scoundrel bourgeois--you will have to reap it with your own hands, so you know, your slaves are waking up..."

And I keep my march, thinking, thinking, dreaming, dreaming. I think on the heroic resolution of those disinherited, who have the courage to put in their hands

the recovery of their lands that, according to the law, belong to the rich, and, according to justice and reason, belong to all human beings. I dream about the happiness of the humble homes after the expropriation; men and women feeling really human; children playing, laughing, happy, with their stomachs full with healthy and plenty of food.

The rebels will give us the best of the harvests: Bread, Land, Freedom for all.

(From "Regeneración," number 69, dated December 23, 1911.)

## A CATASTROPHE

**RICARDO FLORES MAGON**

"I do not kill myself so others can live," Pedro, the miner, said with a clear voice, when Juan, his co-worker, extended a newspaper in front of him called "Regeneración," full of details about the revolutionary movement of the Mexican proletarianism. "I have a family," he continued. "I would be an animal if I showed my belly to the bullets of the federals."

Juan received without surprise Pedro's observation: that is the way the others talk. Some would even try to hit him when he would say there were places where the peons had not recognized their masters and had taken ownership of the haciendas. Some days passed; Juan, after buying a good carbine with abundant bullets, went to the interior of the sierra, where he knew there were rebels. He didn't care to know what kind of flag they belonged to, or what ideals the revolutionists defended. If they were their own, that is, the ones with the red flag, they forced themselves to establish a new society, in which everyone would be his own owner, and never the hangman of the others, very good: he will unite with them, he will add with his own self to the number of fighters, as the number of brains to the magnificent work of redemption, as many guns as of capable brains to guide other brains, and fiery hearts, capable of inciting with the same fire of other hearts. However, if they were not from the same group, the ones who would move around the near area, it did not matter; anyway, he will unite, as if considered the duty of a liberator to mix among his brothers, unconscious, by way of clever conversations, about the rights of the proletariat.



One day the miners' wives were crowding at the door of the mine. a landslide gave away one of the mines' galleries, leaving more than fifty workers inside without communication. Pedro was among them, and, like all the others, without hope of escaping death. Surrounded by utter darkness, the poor peon thought about his family; for him a horrible agony was waiting, without water and food; however, finally, after a few days he will be resting; but, how about his family? What will happen to his wife and his children, so very young? Then he had thoughts of anger, thinking about how sterile his sacrifice would be, and understanding, however late, that Juan, the anarchist, was right, when, showing him the newspaper "Regeneración," he would talk to him enthusiastically about the social revolutions of the necessary struggle of classes, indispensable, so men would stop being the slaves of masters, so everybody would eat a piece of bread, crime would stop, prostitution, and poverty, alike. The poor miner would remember, then, that cruel phrase thrown, like a spit to the face to his friend: "I do not kill myself so others live."

While the miner was thinking, buried alive from working so hard, so the burguese owner of the business, the women, crying, twisted their arms pleading with screams, asking them to bring out and retrun their husbands, their brothers, their sons and their fathers.

Crews of volunteers will plead the manager of the business, asking to let them do something to rescue those unfortunate human beings who were waiting inside that mine for a slow death, horrible because of the hunger and thirst. The rescue finally started; but how

slowly they worked! Besides, were they sure these miners were alive? Didn't they remember that the burgess did not give enough boards for lining the mine, so they could get better profits, and that precisely this one, where this catastrophe occurred, was the worst lined? Anyhow, good willing men were working, taking turns day and night. The families of the victims, in poverty, did not receive from the burgesses--owners of the mine, not even a fist full of corn so they could make some tortillas or some pudding, despite that their husbands, sons, brothers, and fathers had earned their salary from several weeks already worked.

Forty eight hours had passed since the catastrophe occurred. The sun, outside, was shining over the desolation of the miners' families, while, in the depths of the earth, in the darkness, the last act of this terrible tragedy arrives.

Crazed with thirst, possessed with savage desperation, the miners with the weakest minds furiously hit with their picks the hard rock, for a few minutes, later some would fall down exhausted, some not getting up again. Pedro thought, "How happy would Juan be in these moments, free as a man would be, with a gun in his hands, satisfied as a man with a great idea, and fighting for it, and so it is. He, Juan, would be fighting against the soldiers from the Authority, the Capital and Clergy, precisely against the cruel men that, because they did not want to diminish their gains, they were the ones to be blamed for him being buried alive. Then he felt a fit of fury against the Capitalists, who suck the blood of the poor; then he would remember the conversations he had with Juan, so boring all the time, but now he was giving them the justice they deserved. He remembered one day,

Juan rolling a cigarette, mentioned about the astonishing number of victims that industry fires every year from all countries, forcing in demonstration how many human beings die in car disrayment, drowning, fire, or fallouts in the mines, the number of labor accidents, much more than in the most bloody revolution, without counting the millions and millions dying of anemia, excess work, malnutrition, sick persons contained because of bad hygiene conditions, poor home conditions of the poor, factories, shops, foundries, mines and other exploitative establishments. And so he remembered also, Pedro, with what disdain he had heard Juan, at that time, and with what brutality he had refused him when the propagandist had advised him to send his donation, any amount he could send, to the Revolutionary Chapter, who worked for the economic, political, and social freedom of the entire working class. He remembered him saying to Juan, "I am not such a sucker to give my money; I would rather get drunk with it." And something close to regret was torturing his heart; and at the anguish of the moment, with the clarity which comes in critical moments, he thought it would have been better to die defending his class, than to suffer that dark death, hateful, to allow the better life of the cruel bourgeois. He imagines Juan face down, refusing the weight and disgrace of tyranny; he imagines him happy and delirious with enthusiasm, carrying on his fists the blessed emblem of the oppressed, the red flag, oh, good and magnificent, beautiful, with your floating hair in the air in the middle of combat, throwing dynamite bombs into the enemy trenches, as I could see him at front with some brave ones getting to or arriving at an hacienda, telling the peons: "Take everything and work for yourselves, as human beings and not as beasts of burden." And the poor Pedro wished to have Juan's life,

knowing comprehending was fruitful, but it was too late now. Even with the rest of his life, he was death to the world.

Fifteen days have passed since the mine catastrophe. Discouraged were the rescuers abandoning the recovery of mines. The families of the dead miners had to leave from the village as they could not pay rent of their homes. Some of the daughters and widows would sell kisses at the taverns to get a piece of bread...Pedro's oldest son was in jail because he took some lumber from the factory to mend his shack. His mother, sick as a result of the moral shock suffered. All the relatives had gone to the office to ask for the last salaries of their loved ones; they did not receive one cent. The Great Captain recounted debts and the result was that the dead ones became debtors and because the poor families did not have money to pay the rents of their homes, a very beautiful day, since nature is indifferent to human suffering, when the sun burned with its rays on a nearby pond and the birds, free from their owners, worked trying to catch insects for them and their babies, "a beautiful day, a representative of the Authority, dressed in black, as a vulture and accompanied by some armed policemen, went from house to house, putting in the name of the Law, to the advantage of the Capital, throwing all those poor people to the street."

This is the way the Capital pays the ones who sacrifice to him.

(From "Regeneración," number 72, dated 13 January, 1912.)

## WHAT IS AUTHORITY GOOD FOR?

**RICARDO FLORES MAGON**

### I

Bent down over the plough, spilling his sweat over the furrow he is ploughing, the peon works at the same time he tunes one of those sad songs from his village, in which he seems to sink, condemning himself with all the bitterness social injustice has accumulated from centuries and centuries ago, in the hearts of the poor. The peon works and sings, at the same time, he thinks about his loved ones waiting to eat together, the poorest supper. His heart fills with tenderness thinking about his little children and his partner, and lifting his eyes to the disposition of the sun, at that moment, as to guess the time it could be, perceives at far, a light cloud of dust, becoming bigger and bigger little by little as it gets closer to the place he is standing. They are calvary soldiers getting close and at the same time asking him, "Are you Juan?" and he answers affirmatively. They say, "Come with us; the Government needs you." And there he goes with them, tied with ropes, as if he was a criminal, walking away from town, where the quarter waits for him, while his family stays in their shack, doomed to famish or steal and prostitute, so they won't die.

Could Juan say that the Authority is good to the poor?

### II

It is the third day Pedro runs over all the town, anxiously all over the streets, looking for a job. He is a good

worker; his muscles are made of iron; his square face, son of his town, reflects honesty. It is useless for him to run all over the place begging the burguese masters "to bother" themselves exploiting his strong arms. Everywhere all doors close in his face; but Pedro is persistent, does not dismay, and, sweating, with his fine teeth from the hunger destroying his stomach, offers and offers his iron fists, with the hope of finding a master who will "do him the favor" of exploiting them. And as he crosses the town the twentieth time, he thinks about his loved ones, who, lie him, suffer hunger and wait for him anxiously in the poor shack, from which they soon will be evicted by the landlord who cannot wait any longer for the rent. He thinks about them...and struggling and heart broken, with tears running down, walks faster, pretending he will find masters, masters, masters...but a stupid policeman sees him, "checking for public order," and picking him by the neck, drags him to the closest police station, where he accuses him of vagrancy. While he suffers in jail, his family will suffer hunger and cold, or they will prostitute or steal so as not to die of hunger. Could Pedro say the Authority is good of fair to the poor?

### III

Santiago, happy, says good bye to his co-workers. He is going to ask the owner of the hacienda the part; as a sharecropper, he is entitled from the abundant crop harvested. The landowner takes out his book, notes, debts, and after adding, subtracting, multiplying, dividing, etc., tells his sharecropper, "I do not owe you anything; much on the contrary, you owe me for groceries, clothing, wood, etc., etc." The sharecropper protests and goes to the judge, asking for justice. The

judge checks the books, notes, debts, and after adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing condemns the sharecropper to pay his debt to the landowner plus the expense of the court. The wife runs very happy to meet Santiago with the youngest child in her arms, thinking that he will bring lots of money, considering the crop has been abundant; but her face fades when she sees the tears of her hard worker, with sun-burned cheeks, running down his face, with empty hands and a broken heart. The landowner had done his earnings as a Great Captain and the judge, as always, had leaned to the side of the strong. Could Santiago say that the Authority was fair to the poor?

#### IV

In the small room, the atmosphere saturated with smoke from petroleum and tobacco, Martín, the intelligent labor agitator, speaks to his commander. "It is not possible to tolerate the innocuous exploitation to which we are subjected," says Martín, throwing back his head with the beautiful mane like a lion. "We work twelve, fourteen, and sixteen hours for a few pennies; we are penalized with any excuse, to deduct from our miserable salary; we are humiliated, prohibiting us to give roof or help to our friends or relatives or anyone we want; we are prohibited from reading newspapers which alert or educate us. We must not accept anymore humiliation, comrades; let's go on strike, asking for raise of salaries, and less work hours, and to respect the guarantees of the Constitution given to us! Applauses receive those words from the orator; votes for strike, but the whole town knows that Martín has been arrested as he arrives home, and there is an order of arrest for some of the most intelligent of the workers. Panic spreads, the labor mass

gives up, and succeeding again, gives away to be the object of humiliations. Could Martín say that the Authority is good and fair to the poor?

V

Before dawn, Epifania is already up, preparing her big basket with cabbages, lettuce, tomatoes, green peppers, onions which she gets from her small vegetable garden, and, with it carried on her back, gets to the market to sell her humble merchandise. With that money she will be able to buy medicine for her old father, and bread for her small brothers. Before Epifania sells her onions, the tax collector from the Government presents himself, demanding money to pay ministers, deputies, senators, judges, policemen, soldiers, city workers, governors, politicians, and jailers. Epifania cannot pay so her merchandise is taken by the Government. Not even her tears or crying can soften the heart of the public functionary.

Could Epifania say that the Authority is good or fair to the poor?

What is the value of the Authority? To make the law be respected, written by rich or educated men, at the service of the rich, who have to have the guarantee, the assurance of possession of richness, and the exploitation of the work of men. In other words: The Authority is the watchman of the Capital, and this watchman is not paid by the Capital, it is paid by the poor.

To end with the Authority we have to start with finishing the Capital. Let us take possession of the land, the machinery of production and the means of



transportation. Let us organize work and common consumers, establishing a common ownership for all, and then, there will not be a necessity to pay functionaries to guard Capital held in only a few hands, as every man and every woman will be at the same time, producer and guardian of the social richness.

Mexicans:

Your future is in your own hands. Today that Authority has lost strength because of the popular rebelliousness, this is the precise moment to put hold on the law and destroy it; to get a hand over the individual ownership, making it property to all and each one of the human beings who live in the Mexican Republic.

Let us not allow, that the Government becomes so strong. Let's expropriate without delay for public use! And if by unfortunate fate another individual gets the seat of the Presidency of the Republic, war against him and his followers! So by it, avoid letting them become strong, and, in the meantime, continue with expropriation.

(From "Regeneración," number 83, dated the 30th of March, 1912)

LONG LIVE LAND AND LIBERTY!

**RICARDO FLORES MAGON**

That afternoon dies without specific peculiarity. The sun, lazy, did not want to spread his golden hair in all the circumference of the horizon, as if he would be upset from the baseness of men, that because of their smallness they kill each other, because of nothing they suffer, and from nothing they are amused, like poor worms.

Through the dusty highway--and dusty, too--an older man walks. It must have been a long journey, judging by the reflected tired face and his painful walk. He carries a backpack, a shirt, made of bleached cotton, perhaps, and worn out pants. It is a soldier returning home from the Orozco group.

The man walks and walks, walks observing the groups of men and women assiduously, working in their eternal labor, dressed in very humble clothes, with sadness and desperation showing in their sunburned faces. These people work the same, dress the same, have the same look than before the revolution.

The revolutionary stops to contemplate the picture and questions, "Why did we have the revolution?"

And he continues walking to his village where he will see his loved ones, waiting for him anxiously, for sure, children and wife, after his long absence.

The highway is slowly covered by shadows. To his side walks a group of workers marching towards their

shacks, with the same looks of weariness, of fatigue, and maybe resentment. The revolutionary turns to the group and asks, "Why did we have the revolution?"

He continues walking towards the village, where he will find his loved ones, where they are waiting desperately after a long wait, his children and wife.

The barking of dogs denounces the proximity of the village completely submerged in darkness. The wind weeps between the branches of ash trees burdening the road. Our traveler walks, walks, and walks, thinking about his loved ones...

The next day the revolutionary has to go back to the furrow, as any other one to make 25 to 50 cents a day; and if Vazquez Gómez has gotten the presidential chair, the poor keep on being poor, keep on being humiliated by the rich and by the authority.

The revolutionary reflects and questions, "Why did we have the revolution?"

Worn out, he returns to his shack, where he had been the night before. A pot of beans is their dinner, with a few tortillas. The dog yawns close to the fire; crickets sing their love in the cracks; children sleep almost naked. "Who won?" asks his wife, who is so happy to be able to stretch and hug her absent husband's arms, and had not been able to ask the question before. After a few minutes, thinking, the revolutionary answers, "Well, we did."

"But you have not even a cent."

"Well anyhow, we son--we dethroned Madero."

"But we were left down, as always," says the woman.

The revolutionary scratches his hair and, not having any other way to answer, and answering as before, he questions, "Why did we have a revolutionary?"

"Why did we have the Revolution?" the woman asks.

And the revolutionary, surprised of this woman thinking like him, could not stand his indignation anymore, backing inside and exclaimed, "The revolution is only for the bold ones, the ones who want to be in the government, the ones who want to live off of the work of others! "

We got furiously obstinate by not listening to the anarchists of Regeneration, who in all ways have advised us not to follow the employers, to take possession of the land, water, fields, mines, the factories, mills, miner, means of transportation, and that we should commune property to all the population of the Mexican Republic and so, we would consume what we produced. We were told that to struggle to elevate individuals was a criminal offense. We did not listen, because they were poor, from our own class, and as the saying goes, we carry penitence from our own sins. This is what we deserve, for being stupid! Our employers are having a great time right now, while we, the bait, the suckers, the ones who work, sweat, and struggle, show our chests to the enemy; now we are the ones who suffer more than before... Juan sounds the trumpet, announcing a meeting; rubs his eyes...It was a bad dream! Picks up his rifle, and rejoices, knowing the fact he's joining the lines

of the red flag liberators, and yells with sound voice,  
"Hail to my laud and freedom!"

(From "Regeneración," number 87, dated April 27,  
1912.)

## PEDRO'S DREAM

### **RICARDO FLORES MAGON**

Sitting on the threshold of the door from his humble home, Pedro, serious and hard worker, thinks, thinks, and thinks. He had been reading Regeneration, given to him from a skinny worker, nervous, with an intelligent look, as he was leaving for home. He actually had never read this paper, although he had heard about it, sometimes with disdain, other times mad, and sometimes enthusiastically.

As he is sitting at the threshold of his door, Pedro thinks and thinks hard, so hard his head hurts, just with the question, thinking, "How could we possibly live without a government?" It's eight o'clock in the morning, the last day of April. Roses open their petals so the sun can kiss them; hens, busied digging and trying to find worms, while the gallant rooster, opening and dragging his wings, fencing them, asks for love.

Pedro walks and walks. Palms sway and swing their fronds under the shining sky, the swallows gathering mud to make their nests; Pedro is in the plain field; the herd pasture quietly, without the police beating them, hares, playing freely without the need of legislators trying to make them happy with their laws; birds enjoying life, no one demanding, "I rule; obey me!"

Pedro is experimenting with the free sensation, lifting the weight, and cries, "Yes, yes, it is possible to live without a government!"

The picture he sees in the life of the animals has given him the answer, and that answer has lifted the knocks of his headache. Those flocks of sheep at his sight have given him the idea that no government is needed to live in peace. Not having individual property, there is no need for someone to take care of that property from the attacks of the ones who do not possess anything. They do own, in common, the beautiful meadow, the crystal waters, and when the sun rays shine furiously, they participate together, from the shadow the trees project. Without government, those worthy animals do not kill each other, neither do they need judges, neither jailers nor bailiffs. By not extending between them private property there isn't that horrible rivalry, that cruel war between classes, from one individual towards another, debilitating solidarity, so powerful in animals of the same species.

Pedro breathes with all of his open lungs; a vast horizon opens in front of him; as it crumbles down before his intelligence, the dark scaffolding of worries, of prejudices, the atavisms, the bourgeoisie society carefully encouraging to continue this existence. Pedro had been thinking that it is indispensable to have masters and servants, rich and poor, governors and governed. Now he understands: the ones who are interested in the actual political, economic, and social systems continuing are the ones who impose the political, economic, and social inequalities to exist between humans.

Pedro thinks, thinks, thinks. Coyotes, wolves, ducks, wild horses, buffaloes, elephants, ants, sparrows, swallows, pigeons, and almost all animals live in union, and that society is based in practical solidarity at such degree that the poor human species has not attained it

yet, in spite of conquests by science, the main cause of this human misfortune, the right of individual property which allows the stronger ones, the most intelligent, the meanest to hoard, for their exclusive advantage, the natural rich resources, and the product from human labor, leaving the rest without sharing the social inheritance, and subjected to work for a crumb of bread, when they have the right to have everything they need.

The weary heat of the noon sun tires Pedro, who finds refuge under the foliage of a tree, falling asleep. The insects fly and fly over him, like escaped jewels from show windows anxiously sparkling with the sun.

Pedro sleeps and dreams. He dreams himself in a vast land, where he finds thousands of coworkers laboring the fields, while from their throats rush out triumphant notes of the hymn "Work and Liberty." Never has a musician conceived a melody as such. As is, no none until them had felt as free and happy to be alive! Pedro works and sings just the same as the others, and after two hours, they seem as seconds, he and the rest start walking towards the village, where, smiling to see small houses surrounded with flower gardens, they see nothing is missing to make life happy and beautiful. All of them have cool and hot water, electricity, electric stoves, bathrooms, sinks, comfortable furniture, curtains, rugs, pianos, and pantries filled with provisions. Pedro, as the others, has his own home, happy with his wife and small children. Now nobody works for a salary. All are owners. The ones who like agricultural jobs, fine, together working the land; the ones who are inclined to the factories, have gathered together like their brothers from the fields. All industries, at last, have come in accord to produce, according to the needs of the



community, putting the products of all the industries in a huge warehouse, where there is a free entry to all this working town. Everyone takes what he or she needs, as there is abundance of everything. The streets are free of beggars, of prostitutes, because everyone has their necessities satisfied. At the working scene one does not see an old person, as they worked when they were apt, and now they live peacefully, from the work of the strong ones, waiting for a quiet death, surrounded by loving sincere tokens of affection; the disabled enjoy the same privileges as the seniors.

To get to the result, the people from this region started to disregard all kind of authority, and at the same time, declared common property the land and the production machinery. They gathered the workers of each industry to discuss the way to better production, having at front, a list of the demands from the bourgeois's warehouses, and that now was at the disposition for all in a big warehouse.

Many unnecessary industries were eliminated, since there was not a reason for speculation anymore, and the work that previously used to move the policemen, the soldiers, the public and private office workers, helped with their contingency effort. There were no parasites of any kind anymore, as everyone of those inhabitants were at the same time producers and guardians, therefore being at the same time workers and owners.

What is the reason to have a government?

Which was the reason to destroy those people, when all of them felt like owners? Nobody could be better than the other. Each one would produce according to his

effort and intelligence, and each one would consume to fill his needs. What would be the reason to hoard? That would have been stupid. Pedro feels happy and smiles while sleeping. Butterflies fly around him as if they were part of his dreams...

Suddenly Pedro feels a great pain on his head, and awakes startled. It is a policeman, a representative of Mrs. Authority, with which scared shy people believe they cannot live without. The pretty officer has just awoken, with a kick on the head, the good and peaceful laborer. Desperately, she orders him to go and sleep at home, or on the contrary he will go to jail for being vagrant.

Vagrant? When his master just told him there was no work--just two days after!

Pedro shakes with indignation; turns his back to the officer and leaves. His face shows a supreme resolve. Arrives home, kisses his small children, and, with great emotion, says good bye to his wife, to march towards the brave ones who fight at the exalt of "Hurrah Country and Freedom!"

(From "Regeneración," number 85, dated May 4, 1912.)

## FOR LAND AND LIBERTY

### **RICARDO FLORES MAGON**

Pedro was unconscious; he started to work when he was seven years old. His father was a peon in a hacienda from the state of Michoacán, with a salary no more than twenty five cents a day, working from dawn to sunset. The family could not live with that miserable salary; the cloth to make their clothing was more expensive everyday, the first necessity articles much higher, and the bill owed to the landowner was increasing and increasing...

One day the peon took Pedro to his job. It was imperative that the child work so they could help at least with a fist full of corn, the everyday porridge, and the indispensable tortillas. From then on, Pedro must earn his food from the sweat of his brow.

Pedro came to the age of 24, like his father, earning twenty five cents, working from morning to night; however, if life was expensive, then, it was much more now; levies were more frequent, the fugitive law was applied to the maximum, the "fatigues," the free personal service to authority, were more and more frequent, and to their misfortune, as a traditional costume, the debt from the father, had fallen or accumulated to the son, increasing his own. In search of better fortune, Pedro came to the United States, finding work in a section of the railroad. One day he found a newspaper, *Regeneración*, maybe a passenger left it behind. Pedro read the paper and felt something so deep that it left a profound feeling in all of his being. He had

learned to respect his masters, as if they were his parents; in his simplicity, he believed that, if there were not wealthy people, the poor would not have anything to eat. He respected the government, in spite of the treatment he received in Mexico; considered a priest, as a representative of God on Earth. Finally, poor Pedro was a total reactionary.

Sitting on an empty drawer serving as a chair, Pedro read *Regeneración* under the light of an oil lamp, and while he was reading the newspaper, he felt a knot in his throat...feeling something shattering inside his being, and a huge horizon was extending in front of his life.

Pedro felt terribly sad; and he believed that it was so natural to suffer in this world, at least the priest had assured him. Now, he realized that those lies from men of the cloth just wanted to keep the slaves quiet, and his heart was pounding violently. With clenched fists, he cried, "I will go to Mexico and I will not leave any of these rotten birds alive!" He would remember then the priest's sermon from his village, when he would preach, pretending love, and charity, in a loved voice, and cry, "Be patient, my children, and the Lord will give you a better life in your next life; respect and love your employer as if they were your second parents; conform with your poverty; do not envy the fortune of the rich, because that wealth was given by God, merciful Lord. He will give you work, and receive food on our tables. Respect your government, which is the one who is in charge and guards your belongings, people, abide the laws, as well as punish crime and reward virtue."

"Oh! If I would have read *Regeneration*," said Pedro, sitting on his empty shack, as his voice, sounded empty.

"If I would have read *Regeneration*, something else would have become of me and my loved ones."

The wind would filter from the hut, crevices, crying as if carrying the slaves' laments, who are born, live, and die without knowing anything else from life, except misery and pain. Far away a dog howled; a night bird sang mournfully, as the night seemed sadder.

Pedro continued reading, and while reading, his mind had only one idea: to buy a rifle, and clenching the newspaper, crushing its lines, he kept on thinking, thinking. He was not old! He was only 24 years old; however, he thought having wasted much time in the struggle for the ideal. "I will not leave a Burgos alive as soon as I step on Mexican territory!" he yelled with fury, and his voice vibrated as a trumpet calling the slaves to combat determined the soldiers to become men.

The wind would blow through the cracks from the hut, as if it were the weeping and the sighs and complaints, the cries of men and women, old people, children proletarians who are born, live, and die without anything but sorrow and pain...Outside, the telegraph wires, shacked by the strong wind, gave saddened notes. A rooster sang far away; a pair of cats, denouncing, in the shadows their noisy loving.

Pedro kept on thinking and thinking. "I will have a bullet for each representative of the Authority, as soon as I step into Mexico!" he cried, and his voice resounded as if he were the sound of a machine gun in the enemy's trenches...

Sometime later, after this night, when the brain of a man illuminated with a new light, a troop of Carrancistas rebelled against the authority of Venustiano Carranza, disregarding Government, Capital, and Clergy.

It happened that Pedro, converted into the apostle of the Good News, marched towards the territory dominated by the Carrancismo, presented himself in a Carrancista camp, and set a soldier post. Once among these rebels, he gave full range to his generous thoughts.

"Brothers," he said, why are we carrying the weight of another government?" He proceeded, saying, "Now that we have arms in our hands, let's finish once and for all with the beginning of Authority, the Capital, and the Clergy." Then, taking out a small red book from his pocket, he read to his comrades, not about ideals. It was the 23rd of September, 1911. The rebels listened to the apostle, and the opinion was expanding, that if the revolution was going to be wasted, it would be imperative that the country, during the armed struggle, take possession of the land, machinery, and means of transportation; that is if one expects that a Government give happiness to its people, that would never happen, because the mission of the Government is to give protection to the wealthy, with prejudices towards the poor. The Carrancista rebels thought and thought and thought. One remembers that one time the workers from his district decided to go on strike, asking for a raise of salaries, and less work hours. The government sent troops to machine gun them and make them continue or return to their work with the same old working conditions. Another brought from his memory the fate of Juan, his village, and how he was taken out of his home, in the late hours of the night, by the Acordads, and shot

by a shower of bullets, like a dog, at the corner of the road, because he did not allow the owner of the hacienda to rape his wife, companion for all of his life. Another remembered well poor Santiago, that cowboy, with so many children and family, and how he was sent to fight in the army and died of malaria in Tierra Caliente, as he did not allow his boss to steal his salary. Each of those rebels had more than one memory of how the Authority protects the rich, with prejudice against the poor, and in each of those hearts, hardened by privation and suffering, burned a vengeful fire. "We do not want a government anymore!"...they cried and yelled, and their clamorous cry resounded on the Sierra's steep rocks, as thunder.

"Death for Capital; Death for the Clergy" repeated cries, and the formidable voices went down the channels until they were lost in the lands.

The officials perceived the disruption, and went there to impose order. Some shot some bullets, giving an end to the officials, and the new "libertarios," with the red flag high, felt stimulated with heroic notes of the hymn "El Hijo del Pueblo," as they walked away, marching toward the conquest of Land and Liberty.

(From "Regeneración," number 175, dated February 7, 1914.)

## WHAT IS AUTHORITY GOOD FOR?

(same title,different article)

### **RICARDO FLORES MAGON**

That day Juanito and Liusita, Rasa's children, could not get out of bed: fever was devouring them. Rosa squeezed her arms in desperation, bearing the pain before her own flesh and blood. It had been three weeks since she was fired from the factory. In vain she would scrape the bottom of drawers, moving useless implements and other old trumperies; not even a penny in the first one, nor anything of value in the others. Not even a piece of bread or a cup of coffee on the table, and the children burning with fever, agitating their small arms, asking for food. The door opens abruptly, and some individuals, dressed in black, with papers under their arms, break in without any ceremony. It was the notary and secretaries, aides just doing their jobs in the name of the law. Rosa had not paid her rent to the burguese, due to her misery, and the representation of the Authority came to throw her out on the street...Could Rosa say that the Authority is fair to the poor?

In the middle of the fidgeting and the confusion, in the business district, suddenly a burguese, agitating his arm, yells, "Thief! Thief!" From the bottom of the vest's lapel swings a chain without a watch. People gather; the representation of Authority, cane in hand, opens space among the multitudes; but where is the thief? All the people close to the burguese were elegantly dressed. Pedro, after looking for work all morning, without luck, gets close to the multitude, wondering why there is so much excitement, and while waiting, feels a strong hand around his neck, and a soaring voice yells, "Come with



me, you thief!" It's a policeman. Could Pedro say that the Authority is fair to the poor?

Jose feels very tired. He has been walking all day heading to the city in search of work. Dismayed, he sits on a park bench. Getting relaxed, he falls asleep. A violent shaking awakens him: a representative of Authority tells him about the crime of falling asleep in the park. Jose apologizes the best he can, but the policeman orders him to get out of the park. Jose walks and walks, until, very tired, he sits at the edge of a sidewalk of a far-away street, falling asleep again, and suffering, for a second time, a shake from the "welcoming" representative of Authority, ordering him to stand up and march away. Jose explains his situation to the policeman: it's been about three months since he has worked because there is an abundance of slaves, and it has been necessary for him to walk to look for work to exploit him. The representative of Authority tells him only lazy ones do not find work; he handcuffs him, and takes him to jail, where he will work for the benefit of the Authority. Meanwhile, Jose's old parents and his family starve in the village he left. Could Jose say that the Authority is fair to the poor?

Life is unbearable for Lucas and his family. His boss wants to rob the affection of his wife; the boss' son wants to ravish his daughter; the foremen are insolent; the salary he earns is miserable. Lucas decides to leave with his family; however, he has to do it hiding from his boss, as it is known this man is the owner of lives and haciendas. The march takes place; they are yet to fall into the hands of the Authority, so notified by the man in charge of slave escapes. Women are returned to the hacienda, where they will stay, exposed to the appetite

of the master and his son; meanwhile, Simon is sent to the headquarters, as a man with "previous charges," according to the boss' declaration. Could Simon claim the good of the Authority?

The roads are ruined from the torrential rains. The burguese need the repair of the roads as soon as possible, so their automobiles can pass without problem over their roads and their paths. The Authority orders every male from the working class, from the district boundaries, and forces them to work repairing bridges, constructing dams, making trenches, without any pay, so the burguese keeps on getting business, while the proletarian families bite their elbows from famish. Could the poor families say the Authority is good and generous to the poor?

Why do we, the poor, need Authority? She is the one who throws us to the barracks and makes us soldiers so we can defend, rifle in hand, the interest of the rich, just as it is happening in Cananea, where the soldiers are guarding the companies' properties, so that the strikers will not destroy them. She is the one who makes us pay taxes so we can support presidents, governors, deputies, senators, cheap policemen of every kind and from all borders, office workers, judges, magistrates, soldiers, jail keepers, hangmen, diplomats, and a multitude of lazy, good-for-nothings, who do nothing else but pressure us for the benefit of the capitalist class. We, the poor, do not need anything of those cloth-moths and should shake them from our backs so the burguese system falls on the ground; and taking charge of our lands, homes, machinery, means of transportation, food, and other things kept in warehouses, declare aloud that

everything belongs to all, men and women, according to the Manifest from the 23rd of September, 1911.

Down with Authority, disinherited brothers!

(From "Regeneración," number 195, dated July 11, 1914.)

## A DEATH WITHOUT GLORY

### **RICARDO FLORES MAGON**

It has been a week since the comrades had launched themselves into the Revolution, and Pedro felt sad. He wanted to be next to those lions who, rifle in hand, were in the front of the action fighting for human freedom. He would remember the last meeting in his very humble home. It had been at night; the cold air would go through the crevices, as to cool down the excitement. Jose, the man in charge of residence of the mine, would talk enthusiastically. "Comrades," he said, "holding a glass of wine. "To die without glory, crushed by the mine, so we could make the burgess fat, as to die in the battle field in defense of our own right, as production of social wealth, I prefer the latter," and raising the glass to his lips, he drinks the wine in one draught.

The wind had a sort of lament at every crack, as if all the victims of exploitation and tyranny had congregated that very night around the hut so their complaints could be heard. The coyote sadly hauled in the nearby hill, gloomy and nervous. The owl, disquiet with his mournful notes, the little birds in their nests.

Juan, the railroad peon, corpulent, and lacking words, hugged Jose, and said, "I'm going with you," and at the same time, some plates fell from the table, shaken by the peon's effusive redness. The cat woke up frightened; in the next room a child cried; the oil lamp gave off a dense and unpleasant smell.

Jose filled his glass again. All of them seemed possessed of that fire proper of the generous hearts which beat for

a great deal of time. The Manifest of the 23 of September 1911, in red binder, was shining on the proletarian table, as a red-hot coal.

"How many of us are going?" Jose asked. All of them stood up to signify all were in agreement to fight for the struggle. Only Pedro stayed sitting. The surprised looks from his comrades turned to him, who with hands on his forehead, wept.

"You are afraid, ah?" Santiago asked brutally, the shepherd making a disdainful grimace.

Everybody looks at Pedro with pity: the scene was singularly painful. There was a picture of Praxedis G. Guerrero hanging on the wall, the beautiful group of children of the state ready to follow in his glorious steps.

Pedro, moved to the point of crying, raises unstable as a drunk, even though he had not tasted wine--he was tempered--and, with a weak voice, says, "I cannot go with you; Marta, my partner, objects my going with you: she claims I have the obligation of supporting our children. I will stay."

It was getting colder as the night approached, and the whistling wind would get into every crevice. Manuel, the tobacco worker, coughed and from his pressed chest, a murmur could be heard similar to boiling water from a bottle. Everybody sat, except him. He wanted to talk, but his coughed drowned his words. Finally, he claims, "Yes, let's march to the battle, comrades." He coughed, spit a viscous bloody mass, and added, "We will die crushed in the mine; at the shop they are spying on us; our kidneys wear out in the fields; the scaffoldings are

dangerous, and the digging of quarry demolishes the bones; machinery mutilates us...all for the benefit of the burgess! Why not, instead, raise firearms and grab from the hands of the infamous burghs, our natural wealth, that which we have produced ourselves?"

Praxedis, from the wall, watches that union of heroes. The freezing cold wind continues, going into all the crevices. Manuel coughed, and his cough seemed as if it came from the bottom of a pitcher. "Do you hear?" he yelled; "the wind brings us the lament of the ones who suffer the tears of the children who want bread; the anguish of the son with his old parents, dying away gradually, for lack of nutrition; the suffering of the prostitutes, forced to sell their flesh so she can bring a morsel to her children; the sigh of the prisoner, decaying in the corner of his cell; the forced breathing from the proletarians, who tame their own, sweat and blood, the fortune of their master. Let's rebel"

"To the struggle of battle!" all proclaimed, and from those suppressed chests came the heroic notes of the Anarchist Marsellesa:

To the revolt, proletarians;

The day of the redemption now shines...

Clouds turn pink, as if embarrassed to be seen asleep by the sun. Dawn comes; the owl had gone, scared by sunrise, and the brisk happy song, joyous as the hangman disappeared, by the coyote, as they go their dens, and the cat snores in his corner, shakes his skin to scare the flies.

Since then, everything has been sad to Pedro. He was the only one left behind. Since that day, his sadness multiplied. He got up early and went to the mine. He felt his heart sink. "It was my duty to go with them," he thought. "The mine can collapse one day, and then what? My family will be without bread and they will become the same as they would have had I been killed by defenders of the capitalist system on the battlefield.

The dark entrance of the mine was opening at his feet, as if it was a hungry monster yawning, impatiently waiting for his ration of human flesh. Pedro looks around, sighs, and goes down, to do his work.

Five hours later, some sad, taciturn men deposited, at the feet of Marta, the crushed body of Pedro. A huge rock had smashed him like a mouse. A death without glory!

(From "Regeneración," number 207, dated 9 October 1915.)

## THE VICTORY OF THE SOCIAL REVOLUTION

### **RICARDO FLORES MAGON**

Juan is delighted: he just saw the newspaper coming from Washington, about Carranza being recognized as chief of the Executive Power of the Mexican Republic. He hugs Josefa, his wife, effusively kisses his little son and, almost yelling, says, "Now, peace will be had at last! Oppression will end! Hurrah for Carranza!

Josefa is left with her mouth open, speechless, just looking at her husband; without understanding why, just because a new president comes into power, misery will cease. She looks around the room, a room from a poor neighborhood from the Tepozan Alley of Mexico City, and sighs. Everything which surrounds her is miserable; the broken grass chairs, the furnace without a piece of charcoal; the sheets from the cat have stains, product of the child's urine; on the solitary table, stands a bottle with a piece of paraffin, drippings falling down like thick tears.

Without realizing his wife has not understood him, Juan yells, "One was for prosperity and liberty opens before the Mexican country. Hurrah for Carranza!

Josefa opens her eyes immeasurably. She cannot understand the relation between the exaltations of a man in power and death to expression, and submerges in profound reflections, until a lice, the hungriest of the many populating her head, gives a bite that returns her to reality. She scratches furiously, and at the same time, with a weak voice, weak from lack of food, tells her



husband, "Could you tell me, Juan, what we are gaining with Carranza in power with the Presidency?"

"Come on, Josefa, you haven't yet understood about these matters? We are getting laws which benefit us workers; the ones about agricultural labor, we'll receive land from the hands of the government; in fact we will have freedom and well being.

Josefa's lips show a smile, transcending the bitterness from her heart. Even though poor, she had had the opportunity to read something about Mexico's history, and remembers that all past presidents, before reaching the highest position, swore a thousand times, and again to dedicate all their efforts for the country. That's how the proclamation of Sturbide reads, the manifests from Bustamento, the ones from Santa Ana, and the proclamations, manifests publishing from government, circulars from Bulloaga and Comonfort, Gonzalez and Díaz, from all, in fact, including Madero. All promised to make the country happy, and the country was miserable under all of them.

A bedbug walks slowly on the wall, as to kill time taking a walk, while these poor people decide to go to bed, victims of the capitalist system. Josefa sees it and, with her previous practice, presses one on the wall with the tip of her finger, kills it, leaving a bloody mark on the wall. The poor woman gives a sad look to her husband, almost saying, "Poor slave! When will you open your eyes?"

Juan is radiant with joy and agitating the newspaper high, exclaims, "Constitutional order, these are respected individual guarantees; the privileges of the

citizen without obstacles; justice justly administered, free suffrage, no reflection; honesty from public officials, what more do you want, woman? Why do you have a mournful face?"

Josefa replies, "Everything sounds great; but the bread--who is giving us the daily bread?"

"Ha, ha, ha! This is why I have arms," Juan says, laughing, and adds, "Only the lazy die of famish."

Josefa drops her arm in dismay. "Honestly," she thinks, "Juan is a perfect sheep."

Some lice bite her, making her scratch desperately to the point of bleeding. Later, church bells can be heard; they are the bells from the parish Santa Ana; from the area of Tezontlale one can hear yelling, fireworks, all the church bells from all the nearby churches sound in unison with the notes of a "paso doble" from the military band making Juan so excited to the point of being delirious, so he takes his hat and yells in full blast, "Hurrah Carranza!"

They are the workers, Carranzistas, who celebrate the recognition of Carranza's government, extended by the foreign governments, representing their proper burgesses.

A month has gone by. Juan works, but his situation does not change; his miserable salary barely covers him, his wife and son do not die of hunger. The same dilapidated chairs, some stained blankets on their bed, their poor table hasn't been replaced; and in their stove there is not a good soup to nourish them; charcoal is as expensive as

gold; most of the bloody spots on the walls indicate that the bedbugs haven't lost the habit of taking a leisurely walk before eating; the lice burn poor Josefa's head.

"Hey, we sure have gotten a lot from Carranza's rising! Isn't it true, dear Juan?" says Josefa, with a certain sluggishness.

Juan scratches his head due to the torment of the lice and disappointment. He thought that Carranza being in power would be like abundance at home. However, he does not give up and explains, "It's impossible for a government to give happiness to his people in one month. Let's give him time so he can implement the reforms which will benefit the masses, and then we'll see."

A year has gone by. Juan's condition is about the same as before. It is true that the salaries are better; but the landlord has also raised the rent for the rooms; merchants have raised the price for articles of first necessity; clothing is also much more expensive than before. He does not work more than eight hours a day; however, the same amount of work has to be done in eight hours that he used to do in twelve, fourteen, or sixteen hours.

Juan is holding the paper "Regeneración," reading it avidly, and leaves the reading aside, only to scratch due to the parasite bites, using his nails. Juan walks up and down, very concerned, holding a small red notebook, being the only color giving some joy inside the dark miserable hole, dirty and hopeless: this is the manifest dated the 23rd September 1911.

Suddenly, Juan stops his walking and slapping his forehead, and exclaims, "How foolish I have been, and with me, the workers who helped Carranza! Here we are in poverty, the worst misery, even though we drop working just as before the old goat went into power. The distribution of land was a damn lie, as we have to pay for the piece of land given; protection laws to the workers--it was no other than the protection of the Capital, because burgess have a way to get paid for the little given or granted; the constitutional order does not do any good for the poor, as in misery being a virtue, we are the outcasts as always. Death to Carranza!"

"Death to all Government!" Josefa yells, waiving, as if it was a flag, a newspaper called "Regeneración" that she had on hand.

"Hurrah for anarchy!" Juan screams, waiving his red book, of whose pages contain memories of youth, effluvium of spring, balsam of hope and rays of sunshine for all the sufferers, for all who sigh, for all who drag their existence in darkness from slavery to tyranny.

For the first time the squalid room becomes noble, as it serves as shelter to a couple of lions and a cub.

Several days have gone by. The trenches of the Capitol offer a formidable scene. The neighborhood is La Merced. Tanners and apple pickers united here to build a trench in two hours. Men, women, children, seniors, and even handicapped have worked together here. The ugly market building from La Merced has given part of the material. Behind the trench, there is an ocean of straw hats. The huaraches and rude shoes from the defenders,

energetically walk stepping the bland dirt, proud now to serve as pedestals to this large group of heroes. They wait a few minutes for the Government to attack. All is activity within the trenches: women stand in line, men cleaning their rifles; children distribute artillery to the men. A red flag, with white letters reading, "Land and Freedom," smiles at the sun at the highest point of the trench, sending from there greetings to all the outcasts of the world. The proletarians from the Capitol are against the Capitol, Authority, and Clergy.

The proletarians form the slaughterhouse and San Antonio Abad do not show less active. The butchers files their knives, testing them with their thumbs. The streets next to the slaughter houses and Textile Manufacturing buildings are without sidewalks since the materials were used to build trenches; tables, pots and pans, pianos, clothing, mattresses, all have been a mountain of objects in horrible confusion, and are used as a defense for the noble defenders.

Belin and Salto Del Agua; San Cosme and Santa María de la Ribera; San Lázaro and San Antonio Tomatlán; La Bolsa and Tepito; San Juan Menoalco, Santa María la Rhonda, la Lagunilla, all the popular neighborhoods from the populated city have emptied their homes, people, embellished by the revolutionary ardor, are getting prepared to resist the attack from the Carranzistas, the trenches expel dirt right away. The trench from San Lázaro and San Antonio Tomatlán is showing an unusual flag: it's an old pair of bloomers, old and stained. It's a miserable flag! It is the disfigured rag of the world of oppression and privilege. While the rag stays close to the proletarians, the lords are fine; but

when the same old rag is tied to a stick, then the world trembles.

However, if there is excitement in the trenches, but none compares with the ones from Peralvillo, Santa Ana, Tezontlale, who, united with activity, enthusiasm, audacity, and revolutionary care, join Juan and Josefa, who do not rest. Black with dust, they look beautifully sweaty, worn out, running up and down under the trench, sharing energy and enthusiasm for their defenders. Suddenly, great confusion, followed by firing, sounds of the trumpet can be heard from the area of la Concepción Tequipehuca.

"They are the ones from La Bolsa and Tepito and they are fighting!" screams Juan, throwing his hat in the air.

A few minutes after the roar of the cannons, the rifles voice; the beating of the drums; the madness of the trumpets; the martial airs of the musical bands were confused with the city's thunder, as all the trenches were attacked at the same time by the Carranzista troops.

Juan and Josefa get up to the highest place of the trench, where they can see a heavy cloud, where the Carranzistas are approaching, on the streets of Santo Domingo.

"The enemy is approaching, comrades!" they yell at the same time. "Everyone get to the place which is best for the defense of our land!"

In an instant the trenches are surrounded with rifles. The enemy sets two cannons in the center of the street from Santa Catarina and Las Moras, while part of the column

continues to advance over the trenches from the entry of the street.

An imperative voice comes out from the dusty cloud and approaches already at one hundred steps from the barricade.

"In the name of the Supreme Government," he says, "Surrender!"

"Hurrah Country and Freedom!" answer the ones from the trenches.

The shooters follow from both parts; the cannons direct their projectiles to the center of the trenches to open breach in the fort, the smoke saturates the area, making it unbearable; the attack is furious, the resistance formidable, the Carranzista soldiers add blasphemies to their firing; the proletarians, defenders of the barricade, sing:

Countrymen, the chains oppress you,  
And this injustice cannot continue;  
If your existence is a world of sorrows,  
Before a slave, choose to die.

And the notes of this magnificent hymn, that hymn common to the oppressed in this world, that same hymn which condemns the bitter martyrdom of the outcasts, and their holy need for redemption, that hymn, being, at the same time, a complaint, protest, threat, spreading to the four winds, as an invitation made for the dignified and the honorable.

The next day, Mexico's proletarians celebrate the success of the Social Revolution. The burgess system has died.

(From "Regeneración," number 209, dated October 23rd 1915.)



## BOURGEOIS FREEDOM

### **RICARDO FLORES MAGON**

It is eleven thirty on a winter night in Valle de México, when appears, in one unexpected moment, a wonderful miracle, as the stars fall in showers of diamonds.

The district of the capitol sleeps just the same as their inhabitants, working people who spend hours of the Mexican days in the shadows of the shops and factories, adding to the wealth of the bourgeoisie, and the splendid nights in the darkness of their homes, poor, very poor. There is not even a transient in the suburb of Santiago Tlaltololco, with the exception of the passing women, selling and crying with melancholic voices, hiding sadness, bitterness, the torments of a martyrdom of their race: "Booooooiled duuuuuuuck, tortillas with chiliiiiinii."

It is the cold; the flickering of lanterns on the street corners, "tecolates"; a man knocks softly at a dirty door of one of the outbuildings of the Puente de Tres Guerras; the door opens as a big mouth yawning in the dark, and the odor of poverty comes out from within; the man comes in with assuredness and the door closes behind him.

## II

That outbuilding is the home of Melquiades, weaving worker, where twenty others work together. As the newcomer enters, all approach him to shake his hand. How long he has taken! They were desperate; some had

already left for their homes. The newcomer explains the best he can the reason for his delay: he had to leave town to take care of important business for the worker syndicate, of which he is an organizer. In a corner, two workers are squatting and speaking in soft voices.

"I can bet, brother, that that one has been in the whorehouse and now he comes to tell us he has been out taking care of syndicate business. He dresses fine, eats better, he doesn't collapse like we do, because he makes his good old salary, as an organizer. That one is already emancipated. Why does he worry about us anyway? Do you think he is concerned with how the worker feels? He knew important businesses were to be dealt with here for the benefit of the working class; however, he comes late. He sure is not in a hurry so we can be emancipated, because if we did the union would go to hell for being unnecessary! The officials would have to work to live, just as any mortal will have to do when we are able to overthrow the system that crushes us."

"You are right, brother," says the other. "The union or syndicate official feels that as a member of the bourgeoisie and, due to that reason, he is interested in delaying our emancipation."

Everybody talks at the same time, excited as the organization arrives. Time flies, it is important that this issue be taken care of at once. Melquiades raises his right arm, signaling that he wants to say something. There is silence. Melquiades tightens his voice, spits and speaks in a tone that reflects the honesty of a noble proletarian heart.

Comrades, as we explained in the circular sent to all members of "Grupo Humanidad Conciente," this meeting has only one objective: to determine what attitudes we should assume as workers, before the lack of fulfillment of promises, due to us by the Constitutionalist Party, when that party aspires to power, and wants our supports. This support was given, as many hard workers shed their blood at the battlefield for the constitutional flag, and many more went to vote in favor of Carranza. Well, comrades, it has been awhile since we have had a Carranzista government, and everything is just the same than before the Revolution, or should I say, everything is even worse than before because now the worker has to carry on his shoulders not only the old debt, but the new one, as well, owed to the bankers of the United States to consolidate the government of Carranza. That is without counting the hundreds of millions of pesos that we are paying as indemnities for the national bourgeoisie and foreigners who have suffered prejudices during the Revolution. Suffering poverty is extreme; tyranny is even worse than the time of the hateful Porifirio Diaz. Speaking about the workers from Grupo "Humanidad Conciente," what is needed is to join the beautiful movement of the ones who didn't abandon arms when Venustiano Carranza took power, and to shout, 'Country and Freedom!' Yes, comrades, let's adopt the beginnings of the Liberal Mexican Party and make our own Manifesto, dated September 23, 1911. To tyranny, we respond; to tyranny we respond with barricade, to hunger with expropriation! Let's rebel!"

The boldness causes the afraid ones to tremble; others, due to the excitement so related to violence, as the only recourse to effect a right, respond to ideas and desires,

kept in secret; however, no one materializes with a "yes" or a "no," approving or disapproving. The "owl" (watchman) from the corner blows a whistle to alert, and that whistle others follow, until all the owls from the neighborhood and all his friends from the city follow. The dog from next door, where there is a wake, howls mournfully; a chestnut dealer, covered up to his eyes, yells so loud that his voice denounces liquor. Even though our brothers do not notice, the stars wink to our mother Earth, twinkling persistently.

The organizer, pale, convulsive, doesn't know if it is fear of losing his privileged position of his devotion to drinking and orgies, or has exclaimed, "Ha, what do I hear? Really I thought you were more sensible, Melquiades. Violence has never given anything more than blood, tears, pain, and death. I could bet you have been reading a damn newspaper named "Regeneracion," written by renegades, tricksters, traitors to the country, exploits, scoundrels, and cannibals, getting fat at the expense of the imbeciles who fill their pockets with gold, cowards who do not have the guts to come here and publish an anarchist newspaper or to get into any of those groups of thieves, who assure, without proving, that they follow their principles. Who knows them here?

Nobody.

A noise, as the one produced from a paper stubbing the floor, makes at least one hundred eyes turn toward the door. There is a paper on the floor, a paper appearing at the scene to represent itself. One person from the rally takes the paper in his hands. "It's 'Regeneracion'!" The hated paper from all deceitful; the dreadful paper from all the tyrants. The lofty publications that is, at the same

time, incentive for the good, poison for the bad. An abnegated hand slid the paper under the door. On the front page there is a picture of Nicolas Riveles, the accredited artist, modest, talented, straight in his conceptions, as he does not deviate from the anarchist ideal. The paper goes from one to the next, admiring all of the inspiration from Riveles. The organizer grabs the incendiary paper from one of the workers, and looking up to the ceiling, seeing a few spiders as if they were curious as to his exclamation, pale as ever, exclaims, "There is always propagandists for worse causes! The presence of this paper reveals the fact that there is a Magonist element in the city, that works in exchange for the gold received from Los Angeles. Do you want to believe it now? Those men are very rich, and proof is the fact that some miserable people distribute the despicable paper for a few cents. Comrades, not violence! We can get everything within the law, in a peaceful way. When we have three million workers in the union, then we can adopt stronger resolutions. Besides, our working class is not ready enough to take advantage; the reforms our Government works so hard to implement are not even ready. Much more, comrades, the attitude of those armed ruffians are not giving the Government the opportunity to realize the reforms it has offered. I invite you to organize a public rally, running in all of the principle streets form our city, asking, in a peaceful and orderly way, a fast resolution to all those offered reforms form the constitutional movement. By doing this, we can show the whole world that Mexican workers are cultured."

All, with the exception of Melquiades, and from bath workers hands, squatted, gossiped, and applauded, making the organizers mad. Insurrection, as a way to

take from the hands of the tyrants of the town, their bread, freedom, lost at least for the moment.

Peaceful feelings, peaceful ideas, predominant to the ambient, reflected just yesterday, by revelry and protest. It is the flow and rising of the Revolution; it is the momentary retrieve of the revolutionary wave, to return, a bit later, enervating, magnificent, to give another blow to the rock, until succeeding to demolish it.

Melquiades, angry, fixes his belt, as it was dragging down his heels; turns around to see everyone with disdain, a look corresponding to the idea he felt about those men, and what it could translate to (borregos), or stupid! He spits on the floor with anger, and pulling the lock of hair from his forehead, "I have only known a caliber of men who hate Regeneracion, and those are scoundrels. All who struggle with lack of interest for the human emancipation, love Regeneracion. The members from the Mexican Liberal Party are not Magonists; we are anarchists.

All of them argue in loud voices, and time flies, flies. It is six o'clock in the morning. The call of "¡je-llo!," given by a passing man, startles the men. It's too much, we have to end this meeting. Anyway, everything is taken care of; instead of revenge and a redeeming barricade, the protest seemed a procession in the streets. Everybody leaves except Melquiades, and the two workers, who were gossiping, squatting in the corner. The three anarchists look at each other with sadness, move their heads left and right, and again, while an idea goes to their minds: this is the worst weight, that the most advanced workers are condemned to drag, and how much delays our victory for the Ideal.

### III

As it was approved, the demonstration takes place. Since nine o'clock, it has been walking through street after street. There haven't been major incidents. All has been mocking looks to the demonstrators, and stares from the bourgeoisie from their stores, banks, and casinos, looks that without doubt wanted to say, "poor devils! We can keep on cutting their dough for a while: let's live in peace!"

### IV

It's twelve noon; the sun shines in all splendor; it is a privilege for a Mexican sky to be in gala, happy, smiley, amiable, in comparison to other heavens, pale, opaque, speckles, sad as a heart hungry for love and tenderness.

The procession is very long. The once in charge peeps from the corner. Norte del Portal de Mercaderes, and still the tail cannot be seen from the Glorieta de Cuauhtémoc. The multitude is a great river of people marching toward an uncertain destiny. The sun, with its immense kindness, plays with the colors of the banners; all in all it displays happiness; but the expression of the workers' faces, reveals the contrary, as they are marching toward something good, they feel in the depths of their hearts, they are not going to conquer life, but the burial of their hope.

### V

The procession marches at the front of the Cathedral, until it reaches the door of Mariana del Palacio Federal, where the head of the march turns right and continues in front of the Palace, where crime hides in the guise of Government to expel expression and infamy. The head almost reaches the corner of Flamencos Street and portal de las Flores, when a few soldiers of the Cavalry stop in front of the procession, intercepting them. The ones behind step against the ones on fronts as if stopping the march. A deaf murmur of admiration and surprise exalts from that human serpent. What happened? What's the meaning of this? Excitement travels to the heights and assumptions multiply as larvae in mud. It is that Venustiano Carranza has invited the union officials to talk with him and concede everything they request. General favor reaches this assumption. However, let us see what is happening at the head of procession.

## VI

The soldiers' official asks the ones at the front who gave permission to organize this march. The ones who are listening get alarmed. What, isn't it true the Revolution has succeeded and with it the political freedom for all citizens? Why did they need permission if they are exercising a right backed by the Constitution?

There are no reasons; the official orders to disperse the march; some protest, detesting the tyranny; the sack of clothes from Palacio Nacional set on fire, clouding with smoke, and the noise of firing over the multitude of workers. The firing happens rapidly, as if there was a hurry to kill, to finish with the producers of the social



wealth, the simple workers who did not have the strength to put barricades and die as lions, and were part of a farce where they died as lambs.

The three-colored flag proudly floats attached to its mast, following the massacre.

(From "Regeneración," number 211, dated November 6, 1915.)

# **LAND AND LIBERTY (A PLAY)**

**RICARDO FLORES MAGÓN**

Spanish (<http://www.waste.org/~roadrunner/writing/magon/tlplaysp.htm>)

Send Comments to [roadrunner@waste.org](mailto:roadrunner@waste.org)

## **CHARACTERS**

DON JULIÁN, rich landowner

RAMÓN, peasant

DON BENITO, priest

TERESA, Ramón's companion

JUAN, peasant

JAILER

MARTA, Juan's companion

MINISTER

MARCOS, peasant

LÓPEZ, labor leader

ROSA, Marcos' companion

SEÑORITA SOFÍA MERINDIETA, professor at a  
teacher's college

OFFICIAL, ASSISTANT, SENTINEL, DELEGATE,  
first, second, third, fourth fifth PEASANT; soldiers,  
peasants of both sexes and of different ages; workers of  
the city

The action occurs in Mexico.

## ACT ONE

The stage decoration represents a path through a forest.

### SCENE ONE

#### DON JULIAN AND MARTA

DON JULIAN (Emerging from the left and halting in the middle of the stage.) This time the girl will not escape me. How absurd that a man like me, powerful, owner of one thousand square kilometers of land and with great influence before the President would permit myself to drool over a wretched peasant like that Marta! (Looking towards the right.) She should not be long in passing through here. (Consulting a gold watch.) It is ten minutes to eleven, the hour when she carries the food to that imbecile Juan. And the food that those pigs devour my dogs wouldn't eat! But that is what those people deserve. How pretty it would be if they ate what their masters ate! As much as that girl is pretty. She has only been married to Juan for three months; I know that they love each other well, but I am the master and I have the right to her. (Looking towards the right.) Here comes Marta; I will hide myself. (He crosses towards the left and hides himself behind a tree.)

MARTA (She emerges from the right carrying a basket in her arms and stops in the middle of the stage.) (Sighing.) Poor Juan! He works so much and I bring him nothing more than beans. My heart breaks before such injustice, and in my breast I feel I know only mute rage. I am an ignorant person, but to me it is unjust that he who works lives in misery, while those who do nothing useful live enjoying all classes of comforts. (She puts

down the basket; she kneels and puts herself to arranging the napkin.) (Sighing.) I know nothing, but I think that it is not just that those who work the land, sow the grain, and reap the harvest have less to eat than those who live in a continuous holiday without doing anything useful. (Turning her head in all directions.) Poor Juan! Not only do you wear yourself out and sacrifice yourself in your work so that your masters live in leisure, but they are not even satisfied with making you the victim of their exploitation; they try to snatch away the only happiness you have, your only treasure, which is my affection. You do not know that Don Julian persecutes me without rest. Despicable rich people! they do not content themselves with sucking blood; they are not satisfied with destroying our health with their prison labor: they also want our heart. Scoundrels, scoundrels!

DON JULIAN (He emerges from his hiding place and approaches Marta.) Good morning, Marta.

MARTA (Without turning her face towards him.) Good morning.

DON JULIAN (Trying to embrace her around her waist.) How beautiful you are! (Marta rejects him.) Why do you reject my affection?

MARTA Because I love Juan.

DON JULIAN Juan is a poor wretch, while I am rich.

MARTA But Juan I love, and you I hate. (Energetically.) Go away!

DON JULIAN Come on, calm down, little lady, you do not know what you are doing. Know this: hundreds of women would feel happy if I only directed a word at them. I am so powerful that I can obligate you to surrender your heart to me. Do not reject me, because the love that you deny me today with such pride you will have to come offer me tomorrow on your knees, and I will reject it then with the point of my boot.

MARTA (Showing terrible agitation.) Impossible! This never! I would rather die than be humiliated! Get away from me!

DON JULIAN Don't you realize my power? Well fine, know this: I can make them arrest Juan. I have influence with the Government and your husband can be recruited as a soldier. With one word from me, the political boss can hand him over to the Court to be killed like a dog at the side of the road. I can ...

MARTA (Interrupting him in a lively manner.) Do not touch him! Do not touch him! What crime has Juan committed to merit being treated in this manner?

DON JULIAN (With dignity.) I am the master here, and I can do whatever pleases me.

MARTA We will complain to the Government.

DON JULIAN Ha, ha, ha! We rich are the Government!

MARTA Get away from me!

DON JULIAN Love me; I need your love like thirst needs water, like the lungs need air. Decide: me or no

one. Decide before it becomes too late. Remember what I have told you. I can order the arrest of Juan; I can order him to serve in the Army; I can hand him over to the Court to be killed like a dog; I can ...

MARTA (Interrupting in a lively manner.) Impossible! Impossible! What wrong has Juan done to anyone?

DON JULIAN He has not done anyone wrong; he is a good laborer, compliant, hard working, honorable, but I am the force and I can determine your future, your tranquility, your life. Well, then, decide on your action.

MARTA Impossible! (She runs off and disappears left.)

DON JULIAN (Watching her run) It is good; in a few minutes you will know how powerful I am. (He leaves right.)

(Change of stage decoration)

The stage decoration represents a labor camp.

## SCENE TWO

JUAN, MARTA, DON BENITO, DON JULIAN, AN OFFICIAL AND SOLDIERS

JUAN (Put in a ditch up to his to his waist, he persistently removes the ground from the bottom with a shovel and accumulates it on one of the edges.) (He dries the perspiration from his face and directs a look towards the sky.) It is now almost midday and Marta has not arrived with the food. What could have happened? She never fails to be here at eleven and soon it will be

twelve. (Far away twelve bell strokes slowly toll.) Twelve o'clock and Marta has not shown up. This lateness fills me with anxiety. (Pause.) How lovely is my Marta....! She is my blessing, she is my solace. (Pause.) But what will happen? Why does Marta not come? (Resuming his task.) The boss wants this work to be finished today, and finishing it requires three days, but it has to be concluded today because the master can fine me, he will fine me, if I don't complete it. (Straightening out his body and clutching his gut with his left hand.) I am so tired ....! What a great disgrace it is to be poor! (Looking towards the right.) Here comes Marta! (Astonished.) But how strange she seems to me. (He leaves the ditch to receive her.)

MARTA (She appears from the right with her hair in disorder and throws herself in the arms of her Juan.) Oh Juan! My Juan! (Sobbing.) Have you had to wait long?

JUAN (Alarmed.) What happened? Why are you crying? Are we not happy with our love in spite of our misery? (Caressing her.) Calm yourself and tell me what has happened. (They sit down on a rock.) Never have I seen you cry.

MARTA (Drying off her tears.) We are disgraced .....

JUAN Yes, we are poor, we do not rely on good fortune; we live day to day, but our hearts are lucky: our love is a treasure and we are the owners of it. Who could snatch away this blessing?

MARTA The master.

JUAN The master? The master will be able to wither me up in work, giving me prison tasks in exchange for a few cents each day, like he is doing, like he has always done, like he did with my father and with the father of my father. But how could he rob us of the blessing of our love? As long as you love me, what can the master do?

MARTA (Embracing Juan.) Oh Juan, my poor Juan, the master wants me to become his; he has told me so many times; he just told me so and he has threatened me with taking you and sending you to a military barracks or with shooting you down as a fugitive if I do not submit my body over to him. Let's escape, Juan, let's escape the plantation.

JUAN (Somberly.) Escape ...! And to where? To another plantation? To the city? Where would we go that the master would not know?

MARTA Let's implore a judge to do us justice. The Law will protect us.

JUAN (Somberly.) The Law! Look, my Marta, the Law is a thing which does not benefit the poor. In the name of the Law they collect payments from the poor; in the name of the Law, they obligate the poor to donate their free services to the Authorities; in the name of the Law, they pull away the poor from the bosom of his family to make him a soldier, and if the family, abandoned in this manner, must rob or prostitute themselves so they do not perish from hunger, in the name of the Law they punish it ... The Law has been made by the rich to protect the rich ...!



MARTA (Looking towards the left.) (Exaltedly.) Here comes the priest Don Benito; he will save us.

DON BENITO (Entering from the left.) The Lord is with thee, my children. Such a warm day!

MARTA AND JUAN (In one voice.) Good afternoon, father. (Vehemently.) Save us, father! (They kneel.)

DON BENITO Save thee from what? What is happening? Tell it to me and with the help of All Powerful God I will save thee. (He makes them stand up.)

MARTA (Sobbing.) We are very unfortunate.

DON BENITO Yes, thou art poor; but poverty is a virtue; with it thou shalt open the doors of heaven.

MARTA We do not complain of poverty, but of injustice.

DON BENITO (With unction.) Blessed are those who are hungry and thirsty for justice, for theirs shall be the kingdom of heaven.

MARTA The master wants to force me to love him, and threatens me with sending Juan to jail or handing him over to the Court to be killed if I do not surrender myself to his whims.

DON BENITO (Feigning amazement.) But, my children, what are you saying! How dare you offend the Lord Our God with such slanderous fabrications.

MARTA We are not lying: we are telling the truth.

DON BENITO Thou shalt die in mortal sin if thou insist on thine calumny. Don Julian is an honorable and very pious man. He has done more for the Church in my parish than any other man. He confesses, takes communion, and attends the sacred mass on all the holy days. He is a man who, when he dies, will die in the scent of saintliness.

MARTA (With energy) What we are telling you is the truth.

DON BENITO What has happened is that thou dost not live in fear of God. Juan will have committed some crime when the master tries to hand him over to the law.

MARTA AND JUAN (Speaking at the same time in a lively manner.) We have not committed any crime.

DON BENITO This is what thou sayest, but thine irregular life makes me suspect that thou will have committed some crime. I'll bet thou are not even married by law. All you people do the same.

JUAN Father: we are rustic people who are ignorant of everything, but we believe that, for a man and a woman to live tranquilly, loving each other and helping each other in life, they do not need to report their union to anybody. It is the same as when you make a friend. Nobody is given a report of it, neither the State nor the Church ....

DON BENITO (Arrogantly.) Silence, blasphemer, thou art offending God with thine words. (Aside.) So it is

with almost all these people: they marry without giving an account to either the State or the Church, to either God or the Devil. (To them.) Thou art excommunicated. (Marta and Juan, horrified, raise their hands to their temples.) (Aside.) If the poor devils only knew that I do not believe what I say. (To them.) God, justly offended by thy sins, has punished thee here on Earth. However, the day shall arrive when he shall punish thee after death with the fires of Hell. (Aside.) If I do not fill them with dread, they are capable of killing Don Julian - and me as well. (To them.) God wants to test thee; he wants to give thee an opportunity in which thou shalt demonstrate that thou shalt fear him and thou shalt revere his sovereign will. (Aside.) I have to defend Don Julian, the source of authority, so that this rabble does not rebel. (To them.) Thou shalt suffer with patience all the pains of this life; thou shalt resign yourself to all the sacrifices; it is God who ordains suffering in order to reward you over there. All thine sufferings here down below shall be rewarded up there by All Merciful God. All that happens on the Earth occurs because God has ordained it there in Heaven. Well, then, suffer in silence and pray to God to save thy souls.

JUAN Pardon us, Father: will the soul of Don Julian be saved?

DON BENITO (Indignantly.) Silence, blasphemer! Only God shall judge mankind. (Aside.) If we would permit these people to make use of their reason, to what end would Don Julian and I come?

MARTA (Calling attention to the left.) (Astonished.) A crowd approaches. What does it mean?

JUAN They are soldiers; I also see Don Julian.

MARTA Juan, they are coming to take you, let's flee ....  
.....

JUAN (Dejectedly.) Flee ....? And to where? Where can the poor slave go that his master's dogs do not overtake him?

MARTA (Agitated.) Let's flee, let's flee! (Directed to Don Benito.) Save us, Father!

DON BENITO Calm yourselves, my children. Let the will of God be done. The rich are the representatives of God on the Earth and one must obey them. (Aside.) If I don't preach these things, some day the poor will rise up against the rich.

DON JULIAN (He appears from the left in front of an official and a platoon of soldiers.) (Pointing Juan out to the soldiers.) This is Juan, the thief who stole the steer. Take him!

OFFICIAL (Pistol in his hand.) (To Juan.) Give yourself up! Do not move or I will order them to kill you like a dog! (Directing himself to the soldiers.) Tie up this man. (The soldiers approach him and tie his hands together.)

JUAN (Supplicating.) Do not harm me; I am innocent; I am an honorable man who lives from his labor. I have never stolen anything from anyone; I have as witnesses all the peasants on the plantation; if I have done anything throughout my entire life, since I was a child, it has been to work. Don Julian knows well that I have always worked. Let me go free! See that I have a young

wife who needs my support. (Desperately.) Ah, I'm going crazy! (The soldiers pull him and he resists.) Do not take me away! Let me go, let me go!

OFFICIAL (To the soldiers.) Hm, force him to march with you to the jail. (Juan throws himself to the ground, resisting them.) Make him march to the blows of your rifles. (The soldiers assault his fallen body with their kicks and the blows of their rifles.)

MARTA (Embracing Juan.) (Desperately.) Kill the two of us! (The soldiers strike both of them.) (Panting.) The rich ... drink our blood ... rob our tranquility ... kill us ... scoundrels, scoundrels, scoundrels! (She faints.)

OFFICIAL (To the soldiers.) Bring some stretchers to lift up those dogs. (The soldiers march quickly to the left.)

DON BENITO (Approaching Don Julian.) So shall it be by the love of God! (Speaking to his ear.) I know everything! Now it is necessary that the people do not realize the story of the true cause of this violence. I have been able to notice in the people an uneasiness which I had little recognized before. Throughout the country, the peasantry are rising up in insurrections against the landlords. The inhabitants of this plantation have always been very peaceful, but some time ago I have noticed the unequivocal sign of something fermenting in the base of the working class. An infernal leaflet, an abortion of the Devil with the name "Regeneration" has successfully been introduced into the peasant's shacks, mocking the vigilant squeeze of the authorities, and the people are waking up more than is necessary, damaging the Church and the sacred principle of Authority. I have striven

from the pulpit to return the people to their simple ignorance so they will remain comfortable with their condition, but I observe that my words do not have the influence now that they had before: a spirit of rebellion floats in the air and rumors of revolt circulate all over. (Exaltedly.) Don Julian, I foresee that the end of our empire over the disinherited class is approaching with giant steps: a social cataclysm is about to happen; the masses are rising up against their masters, and a new social order might result from this unrest, from this discontent which agitates the proletariats ....

DON JULIAN (Angrily.) That mob will not dare to make an attempt on the lives of their masters!

DON BENITO Such confidence thou demonstrate, Don Julian, and that is because thou art not in contact with the people; but I, who discovers in the confessional the most intimate thoughts of these people, can tell thou that we are nearing a formidable catastrophe. Until a short while ago, the people lived in fear of God, respecting their masters and the Government, and waiting for their salvation after death. Now, I greatly fear that they want their redemption in this life, and only God shall be able to save society from the ire of the people. (Vehemently.) Don Julian, we need to impress the people with solemn religious sermons, we must paint Hell with terrible colors so they submit to it, and for all this, the Church needs money.

DON JULIAN (Boastfully.) Money thou shalt not lack, beloved father, for I shall give thee all that thou might need, for in the end all that I spend for this shall come from the ribs of those dogs.

DON BENITO Understood.

## ACT TWO

The interior of a hut with no furniture other than rough pieces of wood and stones that serve as seats; a petate, a flat stone for grinding corn, is placed by the side of an extinguished hearth, composed of three rocks, upon which rests a smoking pot. In a corner hangs a hammock made from a sack which functions as a cradle. The body of a baby wrapped in cloths of uncertain color rests in the cradle. A door is on the right. From one corner to another, some coarse pieces of men's and women's clothes hang to dry from a cord. The cord should be high enough so that it will not obstruct the view of the characters. In another corner, a trunk and, on top of this, a cot rolled up into a mat.

### UNIQUE SCENE

ROSA AND MARCOS, THEN RAMON AND TERESA; FIRST, SECOND, THIRD, FOURTH, AND FIFTH PEASANTS; MEN, WOMEN, OLD PEOPLE AND CHILDREN OF THE WORKING CLASS; DON BENITO, OFFICIAL, AND SOLDIERS

ROSA (Rocking the cradle with a cord.) I do not know what we are going to do; each day we are more poor, and each day the master becomes more demanding. Today the majordomo, on behalf of the master, tells me that I am not permitted to bring up my hens on the land of the plantation, and that I have to eat them or sell them to the master's chicken coop; and I know what that means: that I make a gift of my animals.

MARCOS (Scratching his head.) I do not know what we are going to do. The administrator tells me this morning



that I owe the plantation two hundred thirty pesos, because the hundred seventy pesos which my deceased father owed has been charged to me. We will be lucky to obtain a single cent when we sell the hens to the plantation. The price, calculated by the master, will be so low, that it will be deducted from my debt. (He spits with rage and yells) Rosa, this is intolerable. Such injustice has to stop.

ROSA (With conviction.) Yes, it must stop. (Calling to the door) Who is it?

RAMON (From outside.) It is Teresa and I. Open up immediately! (Marcos opens the door and Ramon and Teresa enter showing signs of great agitation.)

TERESA Do you know what has happened this afternoon?

MARCOS AND ROSA (Speaking at the same time.) What?

TERESA The master has ordered Juan to be arrested.

MARCOS (Astonished.) Has the master ordered the arrest of Juan?

ROSA (Astonished) But Juan is perhaps the finest man in the region!

RAMON Yes, the master has ordered the arrest of Juan. The master tries to seduce Marta. Marta rejects the master's flattery. The master sees that the obstacle is Juan, for whom Marta feels profound love, and to get rid of Juan, the master has ordered his arrest, accusing him

of robbing a steer. Juan has been taken to the city jail, where they will make him enlist as a soldier.

ROSA (Indignant) This is more than I can support.

MARCOS (Furious) Such an infamy demands a quick end.

RAMON My friends, we must do something. Some neighbors on the plantation will soon be coming, who desire that you Marcos, who knows how to write with such great style and who has read so many books and so many newspapers, writes a petition for them to the Government, calling their attention to the injustices of which we are the victims, so that they apply a remedy.

MARCOS A petition to the Government?

RAMON Yes, in it you will tell them that we all find ourselves in misery: that we need land for sowing for our own well-being; that we be freed from the debts that we have with the plantation, that ....

MARCOS Enough! I will not participate in making petitions of this nature.

ROSA Very well, Marcos, now is not the time to beg, but to take. (A murmur of voices is heard from outside.)

RAMON Here come the neighbors.

ROSA Let's open the door. (Marcos opens the door. Some thirty people enter, men, women, old people and children, all belonging to the working class of the country.)

FIRST PEASANT (Entering.) Good evening.

ROSA, MARCOS, RAMON, AND TERESA (In one voice.) Good evening

FIRST PEASANT We come to ask you a favor, Marcos. Will you, who knows how to write so well, write a request to the Government so that ...

SECOND PEASANT (Interrupting him.) Do you know yet what happened to Juan this ...?

THIRD PEASANT (Interrupting him.) Don't forget to say, Marcos, that we need land to cultivate for our ...

FOURTH PEASANT (Interrupting him.) Also water for irrigating our ...

FIFTH PEASANT (Interrupting him.) And to put an end to the draft, Marcos; and don't forget to tell them that we want them to pardon the debts which we have with the plantation.

MARCOS (Impatiently.) Enough! You are little children, so innocent like some little children. For you, it is as if time has not passed. You think and work like your fathers thought and worked a hundred years ago, like your ancestors thought and worked five hundred, a thousand years ago. You want the Government to free you from tyranny and save you from misery .... Innocents! When have you seen the Government give bread to the hungry or freedom to the slave? (He pauses.) (He walks intensely throughout the hut. The spectators exchange astonished looks and whisper words

in each other's ears. He stops and continues his speech.)  
I do not need to tell you this; the facts speak for themselves: all government is bad for the poor!

FIRST PEASANT (Convinced.) What Marcos says is the real truth, and ...

SECOND PEASANT (Interrupting him.) My parents were as wretchedly poor as I am, even though they lived under a government and ...

THIRD PEASANT (Interrupting him.) Also my grandparents said that, in their long life, they never saw the Government protect the poor, and ...

FOURTH PEASANT (Interrupting him.) Also the truth is that I do not remember a single time when I have seen the Government protecting the weak, nor ....

FIFTH PEASANT (Interrupting him.) My father died in prison; my brother, in a military barracks ...

MARCOS And with all this experience you still wait for justice from the Government? Open your eyes! What we poor need is for us to take justice with our own hands. We must rebel!

ALL, EXCEPT MARCOS AND ROSA (Crossing themselves.) Hail Mary the Virgin!

MARCOS (Indignant) Are you afraid? Well then, bow down your ears and remain bent under the weight of your shame. If you don't hurt yourselves, at least you do not add a new humiliation to those you already have. What a serious humiliation it would be to ask our

torturers for justice when dignity cries to us that we must tear it by force from the hands of our oppressors. Leave me in peace! Go away! (Vehemently) I feel the earth tremble with indignation under the footsteps of your herd. (All remain in their respective places; dismayed, most scratch their heads.) Go away! Return to your trenches to weed them with your sweat so that your tyrants profit from the harvests; go receive, as a prize to your meekness, the rape of your daughters by the masters, and the military barracks, being shot down a fugitive, or prison for yourselves. This is what people deserve when they do not rise up to stop the committing of a crime. Ask? (Scornfully) Well good, accept what they then give you: slavery, degradation, and death.

RAMON (Calm.) We are not afraid, Marcos. Is death not a thousand times sweeter than the torments that the poor suffer? We are not afraid of dying, but what do we gain by rebelling? If we knew that by rebelling we would ensure bread for our children and would secure their liberty, we would not hesitate in doing so; but it does not happen like this. We have had many revolutions and what has always happened? One bad government falls in order to establish another one which is just as bad as the one that fell. The poor always remain poor.

MARCOS The poor always remain poor because, in raising their arms, the poor hope for a new government to make them happy. The Government will not free anyone from the misery of poverty, because that is not its mission. The mission of the Government, of any government, of all government, is to protect the interests of the rich, interests which can only prosper by means of

the sacrifice of the poor. If the poor will work only for himself and for his family, what would the rich eat? From where would the powerful then obtain the luxuries they flaunt? So that the rich enjoy is precisely why the poor suffer. Well then, what is needed is that there be no more rich, that we all be equal, and to accomplish this, there is only one method: To seize from the hands of the rich the land, the houses, the machines, everything that exists, and to make all of it the property of everyone. In this manner, we will not need to rent our bodies to any master, and all that the workers produce will be for the workers, and the comfort which the rich enjoy now will be enjoyed by all the workers.

ROSA (With conviction) This has been our mistake: that we have raised ourselves in arms to topple one government and to put another one in its place, instead of snatching the riches from the hands of the rich. (A knock on the door. All exchange astonished looks.)

MARCOS Who is it?

DON BENITO (From outside.) Open up, my children.

ALL, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF MARCOS AND ROSA (In one voice.) Father Benito! (Rosa rushes to open the door.)

DON BENITO (He enters making blessings to his right and left.) (With unction.) Good evening, my children.

ALL, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF MARCOS AND ROSA (Kneeling.) (In one voice.) Good evening, Father.

DON BENITO (Aside.) Those condemned Rosa and Marcos are heretics. (To all.) Rise up, my children, so that God may bless thee. Are thou entertaining thyself? Are thou celebrating some special occasion? (Aside.) How will I justify my presence in this place and at this hour. I will tell these brutes some little lie. (To all.) I was passing on the priestly road when I was surprised to see a light through the cracks of the door. Someone is sick, I told myself, and I ventured to call at the door. (Hypocritically.) It is so sweet to console those who suffer!

MARCOS Here we do not celebrate any special occasion nor has anyone contracted a sickness. As for how many suffer .... It is all of us!

DON BENITO (With unction.) Blessed are those who suffer on the Earth, because theirs will be the kingdom of Heaven.

ROSA (With cunning.) And those who are happy on the Earth, can they also enter the kingdom of Heaven?

DON BENITO Naturally, my daughter, naturally if they are good Christians.

ROSA Well then, it would be good if all of us will enjoy everything here, on the Earth, and in the kingdom of Heaven. At least, this would be just. A truly just God would devote himself to making sure that we all would be happy, like a good father of a family devotes himself to the happiness of all his children.

DON BENITO No one may judge the works of God. (Aside) Damn it, how this rabble has woken up! (To

Rosa.) The divine wisdom wants there to be poor and rich, in order to determine which are the good ones who maintain, with humility, their poverty, and merit, for the same reason, to enter the kingdom of Heaven, and which are the disobedient ones, for whom exist the fires of Hell. (All, with the exception of Marcos and Rosa, exchange horrified looks and make the sign of the cross.) (Aside.) I must terrify the people by painting hells and devils because, if I didn't, poor rich people and we poor representatives of God: we would have to work to eat. (To all.) To what, my children, does this reunion owe itself?

RAMON Father Benito, we have come to ask Marcos to write us a petition to the government requesting justice.

DON BENITO (Feigning amazement.) Justice! But what happened to thee?

RAMON They have taken Juan, accusing him of robbing a steer. Juan is the most honorable man of the plantation, agreeable, hard-working, a good neighbor. He is a man incapable of committing a crime ....

ROSA (Interrupting him.) (With contempt.) Tell the truth, Ramon: they have taken him because Marta is pretty and he is the obstacle that prevents the master from making her his own.

MARCOS The same story as always: we have to sweat for the boss and we have to have a woman for the boss. (Spits with rage.)

DON BENITO (Feigning amazement.) But is this possible?



FIRST PEASANT Don't you remember, Father, that the Court killed Melquiades the herdsman because he accused the master of dishonoring his daughter?

SECOND PEASANT And who has forgotten that Santiago, the cart driver, rots in jail just because he made the master see that the blanket he sells us in the wage store, besides being bad, is expensive?

THIRD PEASANT But without going very far, how many days ago was Gregorio the gardener sent as a recruit to the military barracks, just because somebody warned the master that he walked around saying that we are made to work like men, but we are fed like dogs.

FOURTH PEASANT We want justice!

FIFTH PEASANT We want land to work for our own benefit!

DON BENITO (Aside.) Land to work for their own benefit, and then who will work for the master, for the Government, and for me. (To all.) My children, God, great and merciful, put thee on the Earth to see if thou were strong enough to endure all the miseries in this valley of tears and then later to lift thee up to his breast. The more thou suffer here, the more probability thou have of ascending to Heaven. (Aside.) I am going to make myself laugh with such lies: if these idiots knew that there is no heaven, they would want to enjoy life here; and then this would bring ruin to all of us who do not know how to work. (To all.) Do not covet the goods of the Earth. The master, all the rich, administer these riches for your benefit. What would you do without the

rich? Who would pay your salaries? (Emphatically.)  
You would die of hunger!

MARCOS (With disgust.) Only those who would not  
want to work would die of hunger!

DON BENITO (Caustically.) What are you saying,  
foolish man?

MARCOS (Firmly) What you hear, imposter!

DON BENITO (Trembling with rage.) Thou art  
excommunicated! Hell awaits thee! (Aside.) This one  
must be made to disappear.

MARCOS Hell? Will there be a Hell worse than what  
the poor suffer? If there were a Hell, it would be filled,  
not with miserable wretches like me, but with crooks  
like you, who use fear to bind the hand of the poor so  
that it does not raise up against its oppressors.

DON BENITO (Hiding his anger.) God told me to have  
compassion for sinners. Therefore, I pardon you,  
Marcos. (Aside.) Pardon him, a demon! He will soon see  
what awaits him. (To all.) My children, it is already  
quite late and I must retire to my bed. (Consulting his  
watch.) Hail Mary the Virgin! It is ten o'clock in the  
evening. (Aside.) In five minutes, I am going to talk to  
the leader of the military detachments and to see that he  
softens that Marcos. (To all.) Remain with God, my  
children. Good evening. (Nobody salutes him; he goes  
towards the door.) (Aside.) The people do not fear God,  
the kingdom of injustice is going to tumble down.

ROSA (Embracing Marcos effusively.) My Marcos, how proud you are!

MARCOS (Radiant.) Death to the rich!

ALL (In one voice.) Death! (They surround Marcos and embrace him.)

MARCOS To your arms, brothers, to take back what belong to us! Long live the Social Revolution!

ALL (In one voice.) Viva!

OFFICIAL (From outside, he pounds the door with the hilt of his sword.) (With a thunderous voice.) Open this door in the name of justice!

MARCOS (Indignant.) The priest has denounced us.

OFFICIAL (From outside.) (With a thunderous voice.) Open up in the name of justice, or this door will be brought down! (He repeatedly pounds with the hilt of his sword.) Soldiers, bring down this door with the butts of your rifles .... ! (The racket of rifle blows is heard accompanied by cries of "Death to the bandits!" "Long live the Supreme Government!")

MARCOS Comrades: if any victim has to be taken, I will be that victim! I will accept all the responsibility!

ROSA (Vehemently.) And me too! (She moves herself to Marcos' side.) (The door falls down, and the official and ten soldiers hurriedly enter pointing their guns.)

OFFICIAL (With a thunderous voice.) Surrender, bandits! You here have conspired against Law and Order. (Aside.) With this deed, the government makes me a colonel. (He gets in front of Marcos and, putting the point of his sword in his breast, shouts at him.) Surrender, wretch!

MARCOS (He rapidly removes the sword from his breast. At the same time he draws out a dagger which he secretly lifts from beneath his shirt and stabs the official in the heart.) (Energetically) Take this! (The official falls dead at his feet: the soldiers, astonished, lower their arms.) In the name of the Law you came to apprehend me; well then, in the name of Justice I defended myself. (To the soldiers, in a solemn tone.) Death has come to your oppressor. Would you now dare to take your brother? (He pounds his fist against his chest.) All of you are poor like all of us, and by supporting the government with your rifles, you support that which makes wretched ourselves and yourselves as well. Your families live in misery, suffer hunger, nakedness and oppression, and you, with your rifles, sustain that which causes the suffering of your own people, of the flesh of your flesh and the blood of your blood. (With vehemence.) The soldier is the oppressor of his own parents, brothers, and children. Remember that you are men and unify with us to demolish the oppression of the accursed trilogy who have disgraced human beings with poverty: the bourgeoisie, the clergy, and the government.

SOLDIERS (In one voice.) Long live the revolution!

ALL (In one voice.) Viva! (The soldiers and peasants embrace each other.)

MARCOS Comrades: we must not lose time: The hour for the liberation of slaves has rung. Everyone must call from door to door announcing the good news so that we may gather together all those who have a heart to redeem Juan and Marta immediately, and to take, for once and for all, possession of the plantation for the benefit of all the workers. Let's go! (Directs himself to the door and exits, accompanied by Rosa, who has taken the child in the cradle.)

ALL (Directing themselves towards the door and exiting.) (In one voice.) Death to the rich! Death to the priests! Death to governments! Long live land and liberty!

### ACT THREE

The stage decoration represents two prison cells, separated by a wall which divides the stage in two parts. A straw mat and a pitcher in each of the cells.

#### UNIQUE SCENE

JUAN, MARTA, DON JULIAN, DON BENITO, JAILER, MARCOS, ROSA, RAMON, TERESA, PEASANTS OF BOTH SEXES AND DIFFERENT AGES

MARTA (In the cell on the right, sitting on the mat.) (Sighing.) Where will Juan be? (Pauses.) Will the Court have killed him? (She lifts herself, seized with great excitement.) (Yelling.) Assassins! Villains! Scoundrels! (She shakes her arms with desperation and finally lays down on the mat, hiding her face in her hands.)

JUAN (He paces along his cell; he stops.) What will become of my Marta? Will she have surrendered to the appetites of the master? (Desperately.) Ah, it is driving me crazy. (He paces.)

MARTA (Sitting up.) If only they would have allowed me to see my Juan for the final time ...! (She sobs.) (She remains seated with her head between her knees.)

JUAN (He stops.) (Lifting his hands to his head.) My head is going to explode! (He hurls himself to the mat and reclines, remaining motionless.)

MARTA (She stretches out her hand to the pitcher and drinks; she places the pitcher back in its place.)

(Bitterly.) How disgraced are the poor! We are not even the masters of our own bodies! (The noise of the latch comes from the door; she throws herself upon the mat and pretends to be sleeping.)

JAILER (He opens the door and appears brandishing a garrote in his hand, fastened by a cord; he approaches Marta.) (With an imperious voice) Do you sleep? (Marta does not move; he shakes her with the tip of the garrote.) Wake up, pig!

MARTA (Grumbling.) Ay, I suffer so much!

JAILER That will teach you to respect your masters. Imbecile!

MARTA (Sitting up.) I respect everyone; but the master does not respect me.

JAILER (Irritated.) And who are you that the master should respect you? A poor wretch!

MARTA (Firmly.) I am a human being; I am a woman. What would you feel if the mother who carried you in her womb was in my place?

JAILER (Impatiently.) Bah, enough philosophies! What you must do is comply with what the master requests of you.

MARTA Would you be capable of submitting the woman you love to the caresses of the master?

JAILER (Irritated.) Enough! I did not come here for you to confess to me, do you hear? Two hours ago, they took

your brute of a husband, with his elbows tied together, to the city ...and you know, already on the road ... (he coughs) on the road .... (he coughs and smiles derisively) on the road thirst will attack him. .... and how it breaks the hearts of us government employees to see our neighbor suffer. Well, then, give him your "water". Ha, ha, ha!

MARTA (Horried, she stands up.) (She yells.) It is a lie! It can not be like this! Bring me to my Juan or kill me with him!

JAILER (Clapping her back.) (Paternally.) Calm down, little lady, calm down. There is still time to return you to your Juan. It can be arranged with a telephone call to the places where he will pass with his escort, that they bring him back, and you will return to having him with you. (Clapping her back in a wheedling manner.) Foolish woman. In your hands is the life of Juan! Surrender yourself to the master!

MARTA (Disgusted, she recoils from the jailer.) (Resolutely.) This never! I would rather die than offend Juan. Ah, my Juan, I am sure that you would prefer to die, better than seeing me in the arms of the master. (Lifting both hands to her temples.) How much I suffer. (She hurls herself upon the mat.)

JAILER (Shrugging his shoulders.) Good, now you know. On you everything now depends. (He spits with scorn and leaves. The noise of the latch is heard)

JUAN (Sitting up.) If only I knew how Marta is .....! Poor darling! How great a heart is hers! To share blows with me ...! (He stands up and resumes his pacing.)



(Feeling his body.) My body hurts so much even though I am accustomed to abuse ever since I was a child. How much will she suffer? Scoundrels! Cowards! (The sound of a latch is heard; he resumes his pacing.)

JAILER (He opens the door and appears brandishing a garrote in his hand, attached by a leather strap. Juan continues his pacing without fixing his attention on the visitor. The jailer gives him a terrible garrote blow on the back, which spreads him down on his face; soon after, he kicks Juan to make him stand up.) Get up, dog!

JUAN (Alternately rising and falling to the kicks.) (Pleading.) Do not ... strike .. me your grace. I am so ... ti..red. (He succeeds in standing up.) You don't hit a defenseless man. See that I am a harmless man.

JAILER (Sarcastically.) Yes, quite harmless, such a harmless little angel that if he will be allowed to flutter his wings he would end up eating all the master's bulls.

JUAN (Desperately.) I am innocent!

JAILER (Irritated.) Innocent, you say? (Scornfully.) Bah, nobody innocent falls into the hands of Justice! Look at the master, at Father Benito, at all the good men, at the employees of the Government: when does the Law put its hand upon them? (Emphatically.) The sword of Justice does not fall upon honorable men. (Insolently.) Look at me!

JUAN (Desperately.) I am innocent! I am innocent! My crime is to be married to a beautiful woman!

JAILER (Scornfully.) Your wife, bah, a tramp!

JUAN (Panting.) What do you say about my Marta?

JAILER (Sneering.) And so Juan Lanas dares to call to (emphasizing) his Mar-ta! Do you know what (emphasizing) your Mar-ta is doing while you, idiot, find yourself here?

JUAN (Desperately.) What? What? Speak, please, or I will go crazy!

JAILER (Sneering.) She is amusing herself with the soldiers .... Ha, ha, ha!

JUAN (Lifting his hands to his temples and staggering like a drunk.) (Bitterly.) What is this I hear? Ah, I feel like dying! My heart cries blood! (He sobs convulsively.)

JAILER (Aside, smiling.) It appears that he is swallowing the fish hook. (Rubbing his hands with satisfaction.) If I win Marta for the master, they will make me a political boss. (To Juan, clapping him compassionately on the back.) Do not cry, silly, do not worry. There are so many woman in the world! Abandon Marta, who does not deserve your sacrificing yourself for her. (From outside is heard the racket of drunken people, the laughter of men and women; later, various voices sing: "The old gray mare, she ain't what she used to be, ain't what she used to be, many long years ago." Explosions of laughter, howls, and out of tune shouts interrupt the song. The noise ceases.) Do you hear? There is Marta. (Aside, smiling and rubbing his hands with satisfaction.) They will make me a political boss, they will make me governor.

JUAN (Supplicating.) Ah, leave me alone, please. I am so disgraced! I have lost my treasure, the love of Marta! (He sobs.)

JAILER (Compassionate, slapping him on the back.) Do not torture yourself, Juan. (Aside.) Who will be able to prevent me from ever becoming the President of the Republic? First, political Boss; then Governor; from there to the Senate, to the Ministry, and, finally, I will see myself occupying the presidential seat. Then who will snort at me? I will rule with an iron fist. (Exalted.) Yes, the people need an iron fist so they don't fling themselves against honorable people. Damned wretches! What would happen to the goods of the rich if there were no authority? (To Juan.) Do not torture yourself. Look: you are talking with an honorable man with a good heart who is going to give you some advice for your own good: abandon Marta.

JUAN Ah, I feel like I fainting. (He hurls himself on the mat and remains immobile.)

JAILER Think carefully, Juan. (He goes towards the door.) (Aside.) He is going to abandon her. My political career is guaranteed. (Exits, closing the door behind him; the sound of a latch is heard.)

MARTA (Sitting up.) If I die, what happiness! (The sound of a latch is heard.)

JAILER (The door opens and the jailer appears followed by Don Benito.) (Showing her to Don Benito.) She is awake. I am retiring to bed, Father, so that you can devote yourself in peace to the sacred functions of your

ministry. (He leans over, kisses the priest's hand, and leaves.)

DON BENITO (Approaching Marta.) (Paternal.) Good evening, my daughter.

MARTA (Sadly.) Good evening, Father.

DON BENITO (Hypocritically.) Understanding that you suffer, I come to console you. (Raising his hands up high.) Merciful God, take pity on your sheep; let your divine hand cover the heart of the sorrowful, so that it revives the hope in them. Illuminate me so that I may give consolation to this unfortunate woman. (He sweetly places his hands on Marta's tilted head.)

MARTA (Bitterly.) I suffer so much!

DON BENITO (Aside, smiling.) So much the better; I will attain my objective more easily. (To her.) Resign yourself, my daughter, to know the worst thing.

MARTA (Standing up hastily.) (Panting.) Have they already killed Juan?

DON BENITO (Caressing her cheeks.) No, I don't want to say that. Simply that it is best that you are prepared for the worst. The crime of Juan is serious, very serious. It has greatly offended God, who in his divine wisdom ordained: Thou shalt not steal!

MARTA (Desperately.) Juan is innocent! Juan is innocent!

DON BENITO (With conviction.) Juan is guilty, my daughter. His crime is one that the Lord Our God punishes with the eternal flames of Hell, and the government of Earth with the death penalty. Juan is going to die ....

MARTA (Interrupting him in a lively manner.) Lord! Lord! I would give up my own life if only you save Juan. (She falls to her knees; she embraces Don Benito's legs and sobs convulsively.)

DON BENITO (With a triumphant smile.) (Aside.) I see the bishop's office in my future. (To her.) Juan was already handed over to the Court, and at this hour he should already be at the point of suffering the pain of human law, after which he will receive the punishment of God, who is All Merciful. (Smiling, aside.) How boldly merciful it is to burn someone for all eternity! Luckily these idiots do not reason. (To her.) Resign yourself and pray for his soul.

MARTA (Lifting her arms toward Don Benito.) (Desperately.) Save my Juan for me, Father, save him for me. Ah, I am dying of anguish! What will I do to save him? What will I do? (She remains on her knees, crying, with her head hidden in her hands.)

DON BENITO (Aside) This is the moment, Benito; take advantage of it or say goodbye to the bishop's crown. (To her.) Ask the master for forgiveness and ... (He pauses.)

MARTA (Lifting her head.) (Lively.) And what?

DON BENITO (Slowly) And if he caresses you, you caress him as well.

MARTA (Lifting herself up indignantly) This, never! This, never! (She twists her arms, seized with great agitation.)

DON BENITO Well, then, upon your head will weigh the corpse of Juan and the remorse will gnaw away your heart until death! In these very moments, Juan marches surrounded by his escort. Imagine it! Imagine it! His guardians ride on their horses, cheerful like those who go out for a stroll. So travel those who carry out their duty to keep vigil over the sacred interests of society! Him, on foot, his elbows tied together, collapsing of fatigue, thinking of you .... (Getting more excited.) Thinking of you, of the selfish woman who is not capable of sacrificing herself to save him from death! (Insinuating.) Do you see it? How great is his fatigue! He slows down his steps; now he can no longer walk anymore; from his face the sweat pours copiously .... with the tips of their sabres they scratch his kidneys, and it livens up his step! Do you see it? Do you see it? In his mind arises an image: it is you, whom he adores. (Marta sobs convulsively.) Now, he can hardly take a step. Do you see it? He has just fallen down, and the jabs of the sabres make him get up. "Oh, Marta, Marta, save me!" he screams in his pain. He can not do it anymore; he throws himself to the ground ... and a bullet ends his tortures ...

MARTA (Desperately.) Ah, I belong to the master! I will surrender myself to the master! Just return me to my Juan! (She throws herself sobbing upon the mat.)

DON BENITO (Aside, smiling and rubbing his hands.) I have won the bishop's crown! I will be a bishop! Blessed is God! Halleluyah! Halleluyah! (To her.) I will run to give notice to the master that he should instruct the authorities by telephone to return Juan. God wants your sacrifice to make it in time! (Aside, smiling.) If only that stupid woman knew that the only thing that separates her from Juan is this wall! (Touching his forehead with the point of his index finger.) For genius, only a minister of the Lord! (Going to the door.) Now, to see what they sniffed out in Marcos' house. (He exit.)

JAILER (Sticking out his head.) (Aside.) It appears she is sleeping. I will take my turn. (He leaves, making the latch sound.)

JUAN (Sitting up.) How sweet it would be to die!

MARTA (Sitting up.) When will the slave break his chains?

JUAN I feel I will not survive my sorrow! (He lets himself fall to the mat.)

MARTA If my caresses were poison, I would lavish them so passionately upon the master ... (She lets herself fall to the mat.) (The latch in the door rumbles.)

DON JULIAN (He enters and closes the door behind him.) (Aside.) Will what the priest told me be true? (To her.) Good evening, Marta. (Marta does not answer.) That rotten woman would be asleep! (He approaches her, sits down on the mat and surrounds her waist with his arms.) (With feigned sweetness.) Awaken, my love, awaken, for here is the man who would give all his

fortune for your love. I have already given the authorities the order that they set free that stubborn Juan. What other proof of my love do you want?

MARTA (Sitting up.) (Supplicating.) Have compassion for me; do not add the sting of your mockery to my immense pain. You do not feel love for me. (Energetically.) You feel the appetite of a beast: satiate it, monster! Love can not reside in your heart, or is there perfume in the mud? (Like a dream.) Love is the sunrise of life, love is the light that bathes the heart in the clarity of dawn. (Becoming excited.) Appetite snakes down the tortuous paths of crime to obtain its object: love does not crawl; it has wings! (She lets herself fall to the mat.)

DON JULIAN (Inflamed.) However it wants to be: you will become mine. That I crawl..... If you were of my class, I would not crawl; but you are so low that I have been forced to crawl!

MARTA (Sitting up.) (Lively.) Abuse your force, tyrant, while the hour of vengeance rings. (Desperately.) I am yours! Devour me! (She lets herself fall upon the mat; Don Julian embraces her and kisses her with ardor; but at the same time, the song of the Anarchist Marseilles is heard, intoned by men, women and children, mixed with shouting, rifle shots, and the clash of combat.)

"To the proletarian revolt,  
"The day of redemption already gleams;  
"That the sublime ideal liberty  
"Will be the North Star of the rebellion.  
(This verse is repeated.)  
"Let us dignify the life of man  
"In a new social organism,



"Destroying the causes of evil  
"Of this vile accursed society.  
"Workers, to the struggle!  
"To the revolution!  
"With the decision  
"To conquer  
"Our emancipation."

DON JULIAN (Standing up excitedly at the commencement of the song and the rumble of combat.) (Juan and Marta do the same.) (Alarmed.) What do I hear? What does it mean?

MARTA (Elatedly.) It means the people are breaking their chains!

JUAN Will the sacred day of vengeance have arrived? (He paces nervously.)

JAILER (He hastily enters Marta's cell.) (Trembling with fear, to Don Julian.) Sir, we have lost! The peasants have rebelled! Some soldiers have made common cause with the populace!

DON JULIAN (Alarmed.) And what does this rabble want?

JAILER Land and Liberty! (The jailer and Don Julian remain annihilated. Marta is radiant with enthusiasm.)

JUAN (He stops.) The moment longed for, finally it arrives! (Resuming his pacing.)

MARTA (Yelling.) Rebellion, how blessed you are!

DON JULIAN (Startled.) We must flee!

JAILER (Discouraged.) It is useless; the jail is surrounded by the rebels. All exits are cut off. The loyalists battle with valor for the Supreme Government and the sacred interests of society, but the bandits are more than them. We are doomed!

DON JULIAN (Astonished.) Nevertheless, we must try to escape.

JAILER (Somberly.) There remains for us no exit other than the cemetery. The reign of injustice is ending!

MARCOS (The noise of the latch in Juan's cell door is heard. Marcos enters accompanied by Rosa, Ramon, Teresa, and some peasants of both sexes and of different ages, armed with rifles, hoes, scythes, sickles, pistols, and garrotes. One of the peasants carries a red flag which shows in white letters this inscription: Land and Liberty.) (He throws himself in Juan's arms.) Brother, you are free in the name of the Revolution. Now, let us go to liberate Marta.

JUAN (Astonished.) How! Hasn't she been seized?

MARCOS All the time she has remained in her cell like you.

JUAN (Elated.) Ah, how happy I am! The jailer lied to me so I would reproach Marta! Let's go liberate her! (Juan and Marcos exit followed by the others.)

JAILER (Leaning out the door.) (Trembling.) The rebels are closing in.

DON JULIAN (Looking in vain for a refuge in the cell.)  
Mercy! Mercy! (Marcos, Juan, Rosa, Ramon, Teresa,  
and the others who entered Juan's cell appear. Some of  
the peasants push Don Benito to make him walk, his  
elbows tied together.)

JUAN (Throwing himself in the arms of Marta.)  
(Sweetly.) My Marta!

MARTA (Sweetly.) My Juan! (They remain embracing  
each other.)

MARCOS (Directing himself to the jailer, Don Julian,  
and Don Benito) (Solemnly) Tyrants: for centuries and  
centuries, you have sucked our blood. The tears which  
you have made us spill would be enough to drown you.  
The people have waited patiently for the arrival of a  
Messiah who would save us: but all the Messiahs have  
turned out to be traitors to the cause of humanity, The  
people had allowed you to live and with you the  
institutions you represent. Now it is different. You are  
going to die and with you will die Authority, Capitalism,  
and the Church, the three oppressors of the human  
species. From today forward, there will not be a man  
who dares to make others obey him; there will not be a  
man who exploits the work of another man, there will  
not be swindlers who between popular justice and crime  
set fire to the flames of Hell in order to protect those on  
top from the rebellion of those below. (To the  
revolutionaries) Comrades: we must complete social  
justice. Let us cut off the head of the hydra and take  
possession of all that exists for the well-being of all.  
Long live Land and Liberty!

ALL (In one voice.) Viva! (They seize the prisoners and conduct them outside of the cell with their arms tied together.) (All exit.)

## ACT FOUR

The stage decoration represents a field on the edge of a settlement composed of shacks. Disseminated groups of male and female peasants of different ages, sitting on blankets, form a border in which others eat and drink happily. Male and female peasants circulate everywhere, expressing great rejoicing in their attitudes. Children frolic. In a prominent place, the red banner with the inscription "Land and Liberty" in white letters. Weapons in a pavilion are mixed with farm instruments.

### SCENE ONE

JUAN, MARTA, MARCOS, ROSA, RAMON,  
TERESA, SENTINEL

MARCOS (Juan, Marta, Marcos, Rosa, Ramos, Teresa and others form part of one of the groups.) (Smiling.) It has been only twenty four hours that this old sun has toasted the backs of the herd, and today it kisses the fronts of free men. Still yesterday we were not owners of a clod of earth to recline our heads; today everything is ours.

RAMON (Enthusiastically.) We owe everything to you, Marcos. Comrades: a round of applause for Marcos. (Many of those who walk about and even those who form groups approach.)

MARCOS (With liveliness and dignity.) Stop there! Nothing is owed to me. Here each one of us has wanted to be free, and to be free each has accepted the necessity of fighting for the liberty of the others, for no one can be free when others are slaves. In this manner, all of us are

courageous and commendable at this time. Do not begin, comrades, to make leaders, because by tomorrow they will transform into tyrants. When one man convinces himself that the liberty of a people is owed to him, that man comes to believe himself superior to the others.

ROSA (Animated.) Very good! Very good! Let us applaud everyone; let us congratulate everyone, because we owe each one and all of us for this beautiful day when we can celebrate the festival of brotherhood, equality, and liberty.

TERESA All that you say is very well said, but if Marcos had not persuaded us of the uselessness of asking for justice from our tyrants, we would be waiting and we would continue to wait, for centuries, that a shred of liberty, a scrap of justice, or a crumb of bread would come to us from the heights, when we have done no more than decide to raise up our fists in order to become free people and the owners of social wealth.

MARCOS Comrades, the experience acquired in these last twenty four hours teaches us the great wisdom of the maxim which says "the emancipation of the workers must be the labor of those same workers." If the workers of the cities would do the same as us ....! But no, manipulated by astute politicians, they have entrusted the Government with the task of emancipating them, which is like entrusting the wolf with guarding the lamb. Now, brothers, to work the earth for our exclusive well-being, but without abandoning the rifle. The enemy is not sleeping; in the city they will conspire against the revolution of the peasants.

ROSA (Enthusiastically.) Yes comrades, alert! The workers of the cities, ignorant of the solidarity that should exist between all the exploited, have made common cause with the political parties and are against us. They wait for a government to emancipate them. Poor misled brothers! What government has benefited the poor? The Government, all government, has to be the oppressor of the worker and the guardian angel of the bourgeoisie! Death to all government!

ALL (In one voice) Death!

SENTINEL (Entering hastily from the right.) (Agitated.) The enemy is approaching the canyon of La Quemada.

ALL To arms! Long live land and liberty! (They take their weapons and the red flag; at the same time, they intone the second stanza of the Anarchist Marseilles.)

"No more to the governing master  
"For a vile salary do we want to serve;  
"No longer the humiliating charity,  
"No longer do we beg or ask.  
(This verse is repeated.)  
"When the proletariat asked for bread,  
"With an impotent voice because hunger accosted him,  
"The rifle of the uniformed oppressor,  
"Murderous and ferocious, answered him.  
"Workers, to the struggle!  
"To the revolution!  
"With the decision  
"To conquer  
"Our emancipation."

(They leave singing, towards the right, expressing great enthusiasm and combative ardor.) (The stage decoration changes.)

The stage decoration represents the office of an important character.

## SCENE TWO

MINISTER, SENORITA SOFIA MERINDIETA,  
LOPEZ, DELEGATE, ASSISTANT, WORKERS

MINISTER (Smoking a cigar at the side of his desk; he consults his watch.) (Yawning.) May lightning strike down that Lopez! It is eleven twenty five in the morning and he still hasn't shown his nostrils. (He blows smoke trails from his cigar.) If those labor bosses weren't so useful to capitalism and to the Government, I would lift them out to the trashcan, not pay them more salary. But what would we do without them? If the workers were allowed to work for their own initiative ... goodbye, capitalist system! However, we have bosses, and we and these bosses understand each other, and those bosses take charge of making them sleep. Without bosses, the workers would have already cast themselves upon the machinery to work it for their own account, like the peasants are taking possession of the land to make themselves economically independent; but the bosses use their cunning to entertain those blockheads with reforms and only with this can we assure that the system of private property does not come crashing down. (The sound of an electric bell is heard.) Finally that damned Lopez has arrived! (An assistant enters with a tray on which there is a card. The minister picks up the card and



reads, aside.) "Miss Sofia Merindieta, Professor." (To the assistant.) Let her in! (The assistant exits.) (Rubbing his hands.) That little schoolteacher is so pretty. (Miss Merindieta enters.)

SENORITA MERINDIETA (Bowing.) Good day, Sir.

MINISTER (He lifts himself from his chair and effusively shakes the hand of the visitor.) Good day, Madame. Please sit down. (They sit down on a sofa.) (Honey voiced.) Please tell me how I can be useful.

SENORITA MERINDIETA We are in misery. We need any kind of employment. My family is dying of hunger

MINISTER Yesterday, I received the communication that you requested this audience, and of course I agreed to receive it today, for our duty as government officials is to attend promptly to all petitions. (Emphatically.) For this we exist: to serve the people

SENORITA MERINDIETA Thank you, Sir.

MINISTER But I have the pain of telling you that the government is going through a terrible crisis. The country is infested with bandits raised up in arms, who respect neither property nor persons and who threaten to destroy the social order, and we government ministers must make all kinds of economic decisions, to reduce all expenses to the point of sacrifice, so that we can confront the situation. For such a reason, Madame, it grieves me to inform you that, at least for today, it is impossible to give you any position. Later, we will see. You will have to present us with your name and your address so that a call can be ordered.

SENORITA MERINDIETA (Expressing great sorrow.)  
Sir, my mother is sick in bed; my little brothers ask for bread .... (She sobs.)

MINISTER (Smiling, aside.) All the better, with more ease will you accept my caresses. (To her.) My heart breaks before such suffering. (Hypocritically.) Why else would God give me such a sensitive heart?

SENORITA MERINDIETA (Supplicating.) Please help me, Sir. Since yesterday, not a morsel can be found in my house, my mother does not have her medicines, the children are cold and hungry ... (She sobs.)

MINISTER (Smiling, aside.) She will be mine! (To her.) For the love of God, you are killing me with your sorrow! (She sobs convulsively; he surrounds her figure with his arm; aside.) She has to fall, she has to fall. If there were no pain below, from where would we on top draw our mistresses? (The door opens.)

ASSISTANT Mr. Lopez!

MINISTER (Aside.) May lightning strike him down! (To the assistant.) Let him in. (To her.) Please come tomorrow at eleven so that I may endeavor to alleviate your situation. You have not touched a heart of stone. (Shaking her hand effusively.) Until tomorrow.

SENORITA MERINDIETA (Desperately.) Twenty four more hours of agony! (She leaves sobbing.)

MINISTER (Furious.) What bad timing this Lopez has! Ten minutes more and .. she falls.

LOPEZ (Entering.) Good morning, Sir.

MINISTER Good morning, Mr. Lopez. (He shakes his hand.) Please take a seat. (They sit down.)

LOPEZ Conforming to what you and I agreed upon yesterday, I spoke last night with members of the labor unions. They seemed very distrustful, saying that the pact made between them and the Government has not produced one more crumb of bread, and in no way has it reduced working hours. (Solemnly.) I have been able to detect symptoms of rebellion, Sir. I don't know how, but that damned newspaper those Californian renegades publish, that tabloid called REGENERATION, has been able to slip into proletarian homes; in any case, I have seen it in more than one home and its influence is disturbing, because it kills the workers' faith in the church and in their leaders and awakens in them the desire to take possession of the social riches, as the only way to escape misery and tyranny. They did not receive me as well as before, and they did not confide in me as they usually do. I don't know how they have come to notice that obviously I get paid to discuss social problems in a manner that benefits the Government.

MINISTER These are bad symptoms, Mr. Lopez.

LOPEZ Very bad, Sir. They already dislike the labor unions. They say that the unions do not aid the worker. Before long, they will want to devote themselves to the expropriation of the social riches, like the workers of the fields have done. I have tried to convince them that violence does not lead to anything good, and that workers should strive for their emancipation using only

peaceful means, especially when they can rely on a government which is a friend to the workers.

MINISTER Bravo! Bravo, Mr. Lopez! With labor bosses like you, we will keep those bums under our thumbs.

LOPEZ They did not remain very satisfied, and decided to send a commission this day to solicit a promise of help from you. Ha, ha, ha! The idiots!

MINISTER Ha, ha, ha! Those suckers still swallow the fishhook! The reign of exploitation has more years of life! (The door opens and the assistant appears.)

ASSISTANT (Going towards the minister.) Sir, some workers desire to speak with you.

MINISTER Let them in immediately. (The assistant exits.) The circumstances are turning this into a comedy. Contact with the mob fills me with such disgust ...!

DELEGATE (Various worker delegates enter. From the torpidity of their movements and the awkwardness of their attitudes, one can guess that finding themselves in an environment so different from their own perturbs them greatly.) (Fidgeting with his hat.) Good morning, Sir. (To Lopez.) Greetings, comrade.

MINISTER Good morning, sirs. (He hurries to give them his hand, which he surreptitiously cleans off in the folds of his jacket.)

LOPEZ Greetings, comrades. (He chuckles, aside.)

MINISTER Sit down, my friends. (All sit down; some scratch their heads, others fidget with their hats, and some do not know what to do with their hands and their feet.) Make yourselves at home. To what do I owe the honor of having shaken these honorable hands?

DELEGATE (Perturbed, fidgeting with his hat.) Well ... well ... already the gentleman here (designating Lopez and scratching his head) .... says, already comrade Lopez will have given you some details of what we workers want.

MINISTER If effect, already Mr. Lopez tells me that you would come to see me in order to solicit the Government, of which I have the honor of forming a part, for the security of its support. (Emphatically.) The Government is with all of you, noble sons of Labor. (He pats the delegate's knee, then immediately cleans off his hand in the folds of his jacket.)

LOPEZ Yes, comrades, I have just had a long conversation with the minister. I have explained your situation to him, the misery you suffer because the salaries you receive are so stingy, and the minister, with his good heart, has felt pity for your sufferings and has sworn to put those capitalists in line in order to alleviate your situation; but because we are struggling with great difficulty fighting against many bandits raised up in arms, it is not possible to put into practice the reforms that will have to emancipate you, the worker, from the capitalist yoke. It is necessary, comrades, that you give all your support to the Revolution Made Government to secure peace and to help together in the great work of national reconstruction.

DELEGATE We are ready to spill the last drop of our blood in defense of the Government.

MINISTER (Aside.) They will fall for it! (To them.) I could not hope for another thing from the noble sons of the workshop, the forceful heroes of the factory, the champions of the hammer and the square, than that they be on the side of the Revolution Made Government to vanquish the bandits. (Solemn.) In the name of the Fatherland I salute you, soldiers of justice. The peasantry of the plantation of La Purisima rose up last night in arms and committed a thousand crimes; the bandits will violate women, will rob, will commit arson, will murder, and will carry their audacity to the degree of declaring themselves owners of the plantation. What will these outrages do to society? These peasants are your worst enemies, because with their acts of savagery and their constant rebellion retarding the advent of peace, business stagnates, salaries can not increase, and the country loses its international reputation.

LOPEZ Death to the bandits! (The workers stand up and shout: death!) Comrades: exterminate those vipers who prevent the Government from putting into practice its redemptive reforms. (The workers: death to the bandits!) Fly to join together with all your comrades! The military commander will provide you with arms and munitions. March like men to vanquish the reactionaries. A special train will put you at the scene of the action in three hours. Long live the Social Revolution! (The workers shout: viva!, and, after giving their hands to the minister and to Lopez, they hurriedly exit the office. The door closes. Lopez and the minister look each other in the eyes and burst into uproarious laughter.)

MINISTER (Disgustedly cleaning his hand.) If they were not idiots, what would become of us?

LOPEZ (With conviction.) If they were not idiots, we would have to sweat to win our bread. Without workers who have no class consciousness, so much of the bourgeoisie, as well as the priests, the government, and the many parasites who live off the sweat of the poor, would have to roll up our sleeves and to adjust to the pick and the shovel if we would not want to perish of hunger.

MINISTER Thank god the number of imbeciles is infinite.

LOPEZ Yes, but they are waking up. Be careful that we don't sleep. Well, I am leaving. Good evening, Sir. Tomorrow we will know the results of the encounter between the workers of the city and those of the field. Brothers against brothers! Blessed is the ignorance of the masses that assures our tranquility! (He gives his hand to the minister and leaves.)

MINISTER (Disgustedly cleans his hand.) I have to give my hand to Judas! (Change of stage decoration.)

The stage decoration represents a mountainous place. On the right, large crags form a natural rampart. Peasants of both sexes and different ages lie dead in different places, mainly at the foot of the large rocks on the right, where the majority of the defenders of the rampart, men and women, are to be found. The children strip the dead of their ammunition and deliver it to the survivors. Some children leave to the enemy field to strip the dead supporters of the government of their

ammunition and they return carrying it in baskets. The red flag, in a prominent place. General shooting.

### SCENE THREE

JUAN, MARTA, MARCOS, ROSA, RAMON AND TERESA

MARCOS Arise, comrades! The anarchist poet Praxedis Guerrero tells us "Live to be free or die to cease being slaves." (He shoots his rifle.)

ROSA (At Marcos' side.) Long live the Mexican Liberal Party! (All reply: viva!) Long live Anarchy! (All reply: viva!) Long live Land and Liberty! (All reply: viva!) (She falls down dead.)

MARCOS (He leans over and places Rosa's head upon his knees.) (Sadly.) She is dead! (He kisses her.) She has ceased to be a slave. (He embraces her with tenderness.) Those are not the tyrants who have wrenched away your life, my Rosa. It is a proletariat who has struck you down dead. The assassin is your brother, is Cain! You wanted to break his chains, and he has paid you with death. Ah, what hell awaits this deluded slave! He will return triumphant to his home, with his hands painted in the blood of his own people, of those of his class, but without a crust of bread for the children who faint from hunger. Then he will comprehend that he has murdered you in order to ensure well-being for the rich and to refasten his own chains. (He embraces her.) Sleep, my Rosa, sleep. In a few minutes, I will be with you. (He kisses her tenderly and gently rests her on the earth. He raises up and continues shooting his rifle. From outside



are heard cries of "Surrender bandits!" "Long live the Supreme Government!" The defenders of the rampart intone the third stanza of the Anarchist Marseilles.)

"The privileges of the bourgeoisie  
"Let us annihilate them with a tenacious arm,  
"And the fields of the tyranny  
"Be the pasture of a voracious fire  
(This verse is repeated.)  
"We do not remain under the heel of the state and its laws,  
"That always enslaved the people ferociously  
"And the ignorance expires which it conserved  
"With its Fatherlands, its Gods, and its Kings  
"Workers, to the struggle!  
"To the revolution!  
"With the decision  
"To conquer  
"Our emancipation."

(The defenders go falling dead)

JUAN (He seizes the red flag and waves it over the parapet.) (Directing himself to the enemies.) Brothers, workers of the city: this flag represents the blood of all the oppressed of the world. She has the color of your blood and of our blood. Unite with us, who are your brothers of class, and let us fight together against the common enemy: the bourgeoisie, the priesthood, and the government! Long live Land and Liberty! (Those outside: death to the bandits! Juan falls, wounded, in the arms of Marta.) They have wounded me!

MARTA (Reposing him in her knees, she separates the hair of his forehead.) Murderers! Assassins! (She kisses

his forehead.) Each death of ours is one link more you add to your chains. (She raises her hands to her head.) I am wounded. (She falls.) (Those outside shout: Long live the Supreme Government! The defenders respond: death!)

TERESA (She lifts the red flag and shakes it.) We die, but the idea that this flag represents will not die. (Directing herself to the enemy.) Tomorrow, when the tyrant wounds your flanks with his spurs, you will remember us, and the remorse will gnaw away your hearts. Then you will lift up this flag which death tears from our hands. (She falls down dead.)

RAMON (He bows down and kisses her.) One more victim of bourgeois brutality. (He stands up and shoots his rifle at the enemy.) Kill us, for liberty needs the blood of good people, but also it is nourished by the heads of tyrants. (He falls down dead.)

MARCOS The enemy advances its assault on our rampart! Everyone here, let's receive it with a volley of bullets. (All respond to the call and prepare their rifles.) (A voice from outside: surrender!) Fire! (All shoot; those outside respond to the shots and all the defenders of the rampart, with the exception of Marcos, go falling to their deaths, until only Marcos remains.) (A voice from outside: surrender!) (Energetically.) An anarchist does not surrender! (A shot is heard and he falls down wounded. He gets up unsteadily.) You who sustain crime should surrender to me, who represents justice. Drink my blood, you senseless fools, and carry my heart to your hungry children for them to devour, because your masters will not toss them a single bone from their banquet. (From outside: surrender bandit!) (Starting to spin.) Ah, all are dead: but while there is hunger and injustice, the revolution will continue forward. (He unfastens his shirt and places his hand over his chest.) Kill me! Murder your class brother, so that your oppressors will be happy! Give me death without delay so that you may return to the city to receive the kicks of your masters as a reward for your treason. Long live Land and Liberty! (A voice: fire! A shot is heard. He falls down dead.)

THE END

Post Office Box 7  
Leavenworth, Kansas  
May 9, 1921  
Mr. Harry Weinberger  
Counselor at Law  
New York City

**MY DEAR MR. WEINBERGER:**

Your letter of the 25th of last April and a copy of Mr. Daugherty's letter to you received. You want me to furnish you with data regarding the sentence which ended on January 19, 1914; but in order for you to judge whether I have been the victim of a conspiracy bent on keeping in bondage the Mexican peon, or not, I am going to furnish you with an abstract of the persecution I have suffered ever since I took refuge in this country. I must, before going any further, beg your pardon for my keeping your attention from other business undoubtedly more important than mine.

After years, many years, of an unequal struggle in the press and the political clubs of the City of Mexico against the cruel despotism of Porfirio Diaz; after having suffered repeated incarcerations for my political beliefs ever since I was 17 years old, and having almost miraculously escaped death at the hands of hired assassins on several occasions in that dark period of the Mexican history when the practice of the government was to silence truth's voice with the firing squad, or the dagger, or the poison; after the judiciary, by judicial decree of June 30, 1903, forbade me not only to write for my own journals but to contribute for theirs as well, having my printing plants successively sequestered by the government and my life being in peril, I decided to

come to this country, which I knew to be the land of the free and the Home of the brave, to resume my work of enlightenment of the Mexican masses.

The 11th day of January, 1904, saw me set my foot on this land, almost penniless, for all that I had possessed had been sequestrated by the Mexican Government, but rich in illusion and hopes of social and political justice. Regeneracion made its reappearance on American soil in November, 1904. On the following December, a ruffian sent by Diaz entered my domicile, and would have stabbed me in the back had it not been for the quick intervention of my brother, Enrique, who happened to be near by. Enrique threw the ruffian out of the house, and showing that this brutal assault on my person had been prepared by certain authorities, and the possible failure of the ruffian's attempt foreseen, at the falling of the latter on the sidewalk a swarm of agents of the public peace invaded the premises. Enrique was made a prisoner and jailed, and finally condemned to pay a fine for disturbing the peace. Emboldened by the protection he enjoyed, the ruffian again forced his entrance into my house. This time I telephoned the police; the man was arrested, and I was summoned to appear in court the following day early in the morning. When I arrived at the police court the man had already been released.... Being my life was so lightly regarded by those who claim to have been empowered with authority to safeguard human interests and life, I decided to move southward, and in February, 1905, Regeneracion resumed publication at St. Louis, Mo. In October, same year, trouble broke loose against me. A Mexican Government official, by the name of Manuel Esperon y de la Flor, who maintained the worst type of slavery in the district under his command, for he used to kill men, women and children

as feudal lords used to do, was chosen by Diaz to come and file against me a complaint for what he deems to be a slanderous article which had been printed in Regeneracion, and dealing with the despotism he displayed on the unfortunate inhabitants of the district under his control. A charge of criminal libel was preferred and I was thrown into jail with my brother, Enrique, and Juan Sarabia. Everything in the newspaper office was sequesteredóprinting plant, typewriter machines, books, furniture and so onóand sold before a trial had taken place. A detail that illustrates the connivance between the Mexican and American authorities to persecute one, may be seen in the fact that the postmaster at St. Louis called me to his office with the apparent purpose of getting from me some information as to the financial status of the newspaper, but in reality to let a Pinkerton detective see me, that he might identify me later. The detective was already in the postmaster's office when I arrived there in compliance to his summons. This same detective led the officers who arrested me. After months of languishing in a cell, I got released on bail, to find that the second-class privilege of Regeneracion had been canceled by the Postmaster General on the flimsy pretext that more than half of the regular issues of the newspaper circulated in Mexico, and that extradition papers were being prepared in Mexico to ask my delivery to the Mexican authorities. I paid my bondsman the amount of my bail, and on March, 1905, I took refuge in Canada, for I was certain that death awaited me in Mexico. At that time, the mere asking by Diaz for a man he wanted was enough to spirit a man across the line to be shot. While in Toronto, Ontario, Regeneracion was being published in St. Louis. The Diaz agents found at least my whereabouts. I was informed of their intentions and evaded arrest by moving

to Montreal, Quebec. Few hours after my having left Toronto, the police called at my abandoned domicile. I ignore until today how could Diaz throw the Canadian authorities against me.

While in Montreal, my Mexican Comrades in Mexico were planning an uprising to overthrow the savage despotism of Porfirio Diaz. I secretly moved to the Mexican frontier on September, 1906, to participate in the generous movement. My presence in El Paso, Texas, though kept strictly unknown, was discovered by American and Mexican sleuths, who on the 20th of October, same year, assaulted the room where I had to confer with some of my Comrades. Antonio I. Villarreal, now Minister of Agriculture in Obregon's cabinet, and Juan Sarabia, were arrested. I escaped. A price was put on my head. A \$25,000 reward was offered for my capture, and hundreds of thousands of leaflets bearing my picture and a description of my personal features were circulated throughout the Southwest, and fixed in post offices and conspicuous places with the tempting reward. I succeeded, however, in evading arrest until August 23, 1907, when, with Librado Rivera and Antonio I. Villarreal, I was made prisoner in Los Angeles, Cal., without the formality of a warrant.

The intention of the persecutors was to send us across the border, this being the reason of their actions without a warrant, as they had done on Manuel Sarabia on June of the same year. Sarabia was one of my associates. Without a warrant he was arrested at Douglas, Ariz., by American authorities, and in the dead of night delivered to Mexican rurales, who took him to the Mexican side. The whole Douglas population arose against such a crime, and the unrest which it produced was so intense

that Sarabia was sent back to the United States three or four days later, where he was immediately released. We avoided being kidnaped into Mexico by voicing in the street the intentions of our captors. A big crowd gathered, and it was necessary for our abductors to take us to the police station, and to rapidly manufacture a charge against us. Our lawyer, Job Harriman, got an affidavit, which I think was sent to the Department of Justice, wherein it is alleged that one Furlong, head of a St. Louis detective's agency, confessed that he was in the employment of the Mexican Government and paid by it, and that it was his purpose to kidnap us across the Mexican border.

Charge after charge was preferred against us, ranging in importance from resisting an officer to robbery and murder. All these charges were successfully fought by Harriman, but in the meantime our persecutors were forging documents, training witnesses and so forth, until at length they finally charged us with having broken the neutrality laws by giving material assistance to patriots to rise in arms against Porfirio Diaz. The forged documents and trained witnesses were examined by the United States Commissioner at Los Angeles, and as a result we were, after more than 20 months' incarceration in the county jail, sent to Tombstone, Ariz., to be tried. The mere reading of the depositions made by the government witnesses before the United States Commissioner at Los Angeles, and then before the judge of our trial at Tombstone, shows that they committed perjury in either place, or in both. Experts for the defense proved that the exhibited documents were gross forgeries. We were, however, sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment, which we served in Yuma and Florence,



Ariz., being released on August 1, 1910, after three years spent behind prison bars.

Regeneracion appeared again in September of the same year, this time in Los Angeles. Cal. On June, 1911, I was arrested with my brother, Enrique, Librado Rivera, and Anselmo L. Figueroa, charged with having violated the neutrality laws by sending men, arms and ammunition to those fighting in Mexico against that form of chattel slavery known as peonage, which has been the curse of four-fifths of the Mexican population, as everybody knows. Jack Mosby, one of the prospected witnesses for the prosecution, said on the stand that the United States District Attorney had promised him all kinds of benefits if he perjured against us. Fake testimony was introduced by the prosecution, as proven by affidavits sworn by its witnesses after the trial was over, affidavits which must be on file in the Department of Justice, as they were sent there in 1912. In June, 1912, after a year of fighting the case, we were sent to McNeil Island to serve the 23 months' imprisonment to which we were condemned, having been released on January 19, 1914. Figueroa died shortly afterward as a result of his imprisonment.

On February 18, 1917, I was arrested with my brother Enrique, for having published in Regeneracion articles against the treachery committed by Carranza, then President of Mexico, against the workers, and for having written that the Mexicans who at the time were being assassinated by Texas rangers deserved justice rather than bullets. I got a sentence of one year and one day, for I was expected to live only a few more months, having been taken from a hospital bed to be tried. Enrique got three years. We appealed and finally succeeded in

getting bond, under which we were released pending the appeal.

On the 21st of March. 1918, I was arrested with Rivera for having published in Regeneracion the Manifesto for which I was given 20 years' imprisonment and Rivera 15. The wording and meaning of the Manifesto were construed as seditious by the prosecution, that is, as aiming at the insubordination and revolt of the military and naval forces of the United States. Any sensible person who happened to read the Manifesto would not draw such a conclusion, for in reality the Manifesto is only an exposition of facts and a fair warning to all mankind of the evils those facts might produce. In one of its paragraphs it is clearly stated that no one can make a revolution on account of it being a social phenomenon. The Manifesto was aimed at the prevention of the evils a revolution carries itself, the revolution being regarded from a scientific standpoint as a world-wide inevitable result of the unsettled conditions of the world. The Manifesto does not refer in the least to the policies of the American Government in the last war, nor gives aid and comfort to its enemies. It is neither pro-German nor pro-Ally, and does not single out the United States in its brief review of the world conditions. It was enough, however, to secure for me a life term behind prison bars. The persecution, this time, was exceedingly severe. My poor wife, Maria, was incarcerated during five months, and is now free on bond awaiting trial for having notified my friends of my arrest, that they should assist me in my legal defense.

After reading this extremely long and dreadfully tedious statement of facts, how could any person believe that I have rightfully been prosecuted and in no way

persecuted? In each case, and in defiance of the law, bail has been fixed at enormous rates so as to prevent me making use of the privilege. As to the veracity of my assertions, my honor as a life-long fighter for justice is hereby solemnly pledged.

Mr. Daugherty says I am a dangerous man because of the doctrines I assert and practice. Now, then, the doctrines I assert and practice are the anarchist doctrines, and I challenge all fair-minded men and women the world over to prove to me that the anarchist doctrines are detrimental to the human race. Anarchism strives for the establishment of a social order based on brotherhood and love, as against the actual form of society, founded on violence, hatred and rivalry of one class against the other, and of members of one class among themselves. Anarchism aims at establishing peace forever among all the races of the earth by the suppression of this fountain of all evils—the right of private property. If this is not a beautiful ideal, what is it? No one thinks that the peoples of the civilized world are living under ideal conditions. Every conscientious person feels himself shocked at the sight of this continual strife of men against man, of this unending deceiving of one another. Material success is the goal that lures men and women the world over, and to achieve it no vileness is too vile, no baseness is too base, to deter its worshippers from coveting it. The results of this universal madness are appalling; virtue is trampled upon by crime, and artfulness takes the place of honesty. Sincerity is only a word, or at the most, a mask under which fraud grins. There is no courage to uphold the convictions. Frankness has disappeared and deceit forms the slippery plan on which man meets man in his social and political intercourse. "Everything for success" is the motto, and the noble face of the earth is desecrated

with the blood of the contending beasts . . . Such are the conditions under which we civilized men live, conditions which breed all sorts of moral and material torture, alas! And all sorts of moral and material degradation. At the correction of all these unwholesome influences and the anarchist doctrines aim, and a man who sustains these doctrines of brotherhood and love can never be called dangerous by any sensible, decent person.

Mr. Daugherty agrees on my being sick, but he thinks that I can be taken care of in my sickness in prison as well as it could be done on the outside. Environment is all-important in the treatment of diseases, and no one would ever imagine that a prison cell is the ideal environment for a sick man, and much less when the presence in prison of such a man is owing to his having been faithful to truth and justice. The government officials have always said that there are not in the United States persons kept in captivity on account of their beliefs, but Mr. Daugherty says in his letter to you: "He, in no manner, evinces any evidence of repentance, but on the contrary, rather prides himself upon his defiance of the law.... I am of the opinion, therefore, that until he indicates a different spirit than that expressed in his letter to Mrs. Branstetter, he should at least serve until August 15, 1925." The quoted paragraphs, and the part of Mr. Daugherty's letter in which he says I am regarded dangerous on account of my doctrines, are the best evidence that there are persons kept in prison owing to their social and political beliefs. If I believed that it is not persecution, but prosecution, that has been exerted against me; if I believed that the law under which I was given a life term in prison was a good law, I would be set free, according to Mr. Daugherty. That law was undoubtedly a good law but to a few persons, those who

had something to gain with its enactment. As for the masses, the law was a bad one, for thanks to it thousands of young American men lost their lives in Europe, many thousands more were maimed or otherwise incapacitated to earn a livelihood, and thanks to it the colossal European carnage, where scores of millions of men were either slain or maimed for life, received momentous impulse and bred the tremendous financial crises which is threatening to plunge the world into chaos. However, as I have stated before, I did not violate this law with the issuance of the Manifesto of March 16, 1918.

As for the matter of repentance to which Mr. Daugherty gives so much importance, I sincerely state that my conscience does not reproach me with having done wrong, and therefore, to repent of what I am convinced is right would be a crime on my part, a crime that my conscience would never pardon me. He who commits an anti-social act may repent, and it is desired that he repents, but it is not fair to exact a vow of repentance from him who all he wishes is to secure freedom, justice and well-being for all his fellow men regardless of race and creed. If some one ever convinces me that it is just that children starve, and that young women have to choose of two infernos oneóprostitution or starvation; if there is a person who could drive out of my brain the idea of not being honorable to kill within oneself that elementary instinct of sympathy which prompts every sociable animal to stand by the members of its species, and that it is monstrous that man, the most intelligent of beasts, has to wield the weapons of fraud and deceit if he wants to achieve success; if the idea that man must be the wolf of man enters my brain, then I shall repent. But as this will never be, my fate is sealed. I have to die in prison, branded as a felon. Darkness is already

enshrining me as though anxious of anticipating for me the eternal shadows into which the dead sink. I accept my fate with manly resignation, convinced that some day, long perhaps after Mr. Daugherty and myself have breathed our last, and of what we have been there only remained his name exquisitely carved in a marble flag upon his grave in a fashionable cemetery, and mine, only a number, 14596, roughly scraped in some plebeian stone in the prison graveyard, justice shall be done me.

With many thanks for the activity you have shown on  
my behalf, I remain, sincerely yours,

Ricardo Flores Magon

Ricardo Flores Magon  
Post Office Box 7  
Leavenworth, Kansas  
March 16, 1922  
**MISS ERMA BARSKY**  
New York, N.Y.

My dear comrade:

Your postcard, and a letter from Dr. Weinberger received. Mr. Weinberger most kindly makes me know how my case, for lack of proper recommendations, cannot go to the President to be considered, according to word sent him by the Department of Justice. The recommendations, strange as it would seem to common mortals, are not my growing infirmity, nor the flagrant violation of the most rudimentary justice committed by the judge of my trial, nor my having dependents, nothing, in fine, that might appeal to the average human heart and conscience. The recommendations which the government officials deem of great importance are those that the judge and district attorney can make, and in my case, they were adverse . . . The judge could not confess his having been biased, and the district attorney found it hard to state that his zeal in getting for me the maximum penalty, was prompted by an immoderate desire to get promoted.

I beg you, my good comrade, to tell Mr. Weinberger that his letter was received, and that I appreciate his efforts to obtain my release, and his kindness in always keeping one well posted as to his activities in my behalf. Now he is going to Washington. I think, however, that my case is a hopeless one. Humane interests have nothing to do with government officials. Government officials are part



of a huge machine which has no heart, nor nerves, nor conscience. The governmental machine will never pay heed to my sufferings. That I am going blind? The machine will say with a shrug of its shoulders: "So much the worse for him." That I shall die here? "Wellóthe machine will sayóthere will be room enough in the prison graveyard to accommodate a corpse." That my dear ones may starve. "They will not be the only ones starving under the sun."ówill be its reply. The essential thing for this machine to take a case into consideration, are not ethical motives. Expediency, and not justice, is the key which opens the prison gates. Yet, it is in the name of justice that it acts . . . Its assumption would move to laughter, were not for the tragedy in it. For nothing fruitful, noble, or great can ever result from expediency under the cloak of justice. It is the wolf under the guise of sheep. It is a crime stalking abroad, unavoidable as it is irrerecognizable and much more dangerous, in that it assumes a mien of dignity, and decency. Thus, in the name of justice the most savage and revolting acts are perpetrated. Was not in justice's name that the officialdom of the most advanced nations of the world urged their peoples to cut each other's throats? and knowing this, how might I harbour any hopes as to the government officials ever getting moved by my torments? I am caught by the formidable mechanism of a monstrous machine, and my flesh may get ripped open, and my bones crushed, and my moans fill the space and make the very infinite shudder, but the machine will not stop grinding, grinding, grinding . . . Had I a friend with political influence, that is, a piece of this astounding machine, I could be set free even if I had stepped upon one or all of the Ten Commandments. But I have none, and for expediency's sake I may rot and die, pent up like a wild beast in an iron cage, far away from

the innocent creatures I love. My crime is one of those which have no atonement. Murder? No; it was not murder; human life is cheap to the machine's eyes, and thus a murderer gets easily released, or if he had killed by the wholesale, he will never dwell in an iron cage, but will be laden with honorific crosses and medals instead. Swindle? No; if this were the case I would have been appointed president of one big corporation or other. I have not killed, I have not stolen, I have not exploited women's prostitution, I have not caused my fellowmen to shed a tear or a drop of sweat or blood. I am a dreamer—this is my crime! I dream of the Beautiful, and find pleasure in sharing my dreams with my fellow-creatures. This is my crime; this is why I have been branded as a felon, and thrown into this hell, when the darkness begins to enshroud me before I am dead . . . Yet, my dream of the Beautiful, and my cherished visions of a humanity living in peace, and love, and freedom, dreams and visions which the machine abhors, shall not die with one, for so long as there should be upon this Earth of ours an aching heart or any eye full of tears, my dreams and my visions shall live!

And now, good-bye, my good Erma. I received candyónice exquisite candyónight before last. Thanks, thanks, thanks. And to-night, I received such a wonderful letter from our beloved Ellen! I will write her next week. In the meantime, please offer her my love, and to all the other good comrades, and I hope that you will accept it as the only thing a captive can give.

Ricardo Flores Magon

## **RICARDO FLORES MAGON**

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Regeneracion [Mexico, D.F.]1900 - 1901  
[San Antonio, Texas] 1904  
[St. Louis, Missouri] 1905 - 1906  
[Los Angeles, CA] 1910 - 1918  
Revolucion [Los Angeles, CA] 1907  
Tierra y Libertad [Los Angeles, CA] 1908